

The Scarlet Night-Rider

by White Wolf Writers

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Summary: Hiccup and Toothless are out on a routine flight around the Isle of Berk when they witness another Night Fury crash-land in the forest off Raven point. When they go to investigate will they find more than they bargained for? Follow our heroes on their journey as they discover a whole new world, adventure and possibly a new member of the village of Berk? HiccupXOC ToothlessXOC

1. Chapter 1

****Alrighty then! This is my first time writing anything for 'How To Train Your Dragon' so I hope this works. Hope you enjoy! Please comment or review if you will! I'll try to update weekly but don't hold your breath.****

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Hiccup could hear his dragon Toothless snoring away in the corner of his room. It wasn't a loud snoring like Hiccup's dad, who snored like a chainsaw, but a deep grumbling in the back of Toothless' throat. It was slightly comforting, knowing he was there.

Hiccup hoisted himself out of bed, fighting the urge to curl up under his warm blankets again, stretched and sighed. Toothless heard the noise and opened an acid green eye to look at his rider. Satisfied that Hiccup wasn't in the throes of a nightmare, Toothless stood and arched his back, stretching out his wings as much as he could in the small room.

The two made their way downstairs where a fire roared happily in the fireplace, lighting the room in a warm glow. Hiccup's dad, Stoic the Vast sat by the table watching the flames dance as he stuffed a large meat sandwich in his face. Crumbs hung in his great red beard but he didn't seem to mind. Probably saving it for later.

"Mornin' Hiccup! Sleep well?" Stoic managed past the food in his mouth. After the battle with the Queen Dragon, Stoic had made a huge change; welcoming his son home, saying goodnight or good morning, just the small things. But it made a world of difference to Hiccup. The Chief had even gone as far as to place Hiccup in charge of training the new recruits and dragons.

"Good, thanks. I'm gonna go fly with Toothless this morning before the training starts," he patted the dragon on the head who purred happily and dug into his morning basket of cod, his favorite, "I haven't had the chance in a while. Been busy and allâ€|" Hiccup grabbed a few rolls of bread and a waterskin and headed out the door.

"Bye Son!" Stoic called as Toothless scrambled to down the last of his fish before darting out the door after Hiccup.

"You ready Buddy?" Hiccup asked as Toothless bounced around threatening to knock down several racks of weapons and fish. He strapped the saddle down and attached the waterskin. Hiccup hooked himself to the saddle just in time as Toothless bounded forward flapping his wings, propelling them into the welcoming blue sky.

"Woohoo!" Hiccup pumped his fists into the air as they flew over the Island of Berk. Flying was the most amazing feeling ever. The wind against your cheeks, ruffling through your hair; the way his stomach flip-flopped with every dive and spin the dragon and rider would pull off. It was amazing in the most indescribably way. It was truly something you had to experience to understand.

"So Buddy, where you feel up to going today?" Hiccup leaned forward and petted the black dragon on the head, earning him a deep purr. Just as Toothless was about to turn in the direction he wanted to go, when in the distance they saw a blackâ€|thingâ€|streaking towards the forest just off Raven Point. A shriek pierced the air and Toothless perked his ears at the sound before speeding toward the black streak. As they drew closer Hiccup squinted and saw great black wings struggling to keep airborne. It was a dragon! A black dragon fall/flying to earth with dangerous speeds.

"C'mon Toothless!" Hiccup yelled over the wind tearing past them and the Night Fury pumped his wings to go faster.

They didn't make it in time.

The black dragon crashed into the forest with an agonizing screech that sent a chill down Hiccup's spine. Still, he willed his dragon fly faster. Hiccup spotted a great pine nearly torn in half and motioned Toothless to land.

The destruction was incredible; it was like finding Toothless all over again. The dirt was carved from the dragon's crash landing; branches broken and dangling uselessly from their owners; spots of blood smeared across the surrounding greenery. This was bad.

Hiccup and Toothless followed the trail of destruction to the cove where Hiccup had found and made friends with Toothless. The feeling of dÃ©jÃ vu nearly overwhelmed Hiccup and Toothless as they edged

close to the cove and gasped.

Half lying in the pond and breathing heavily was another Night Fury! But something was off. It was smaller, larger wings yes, but it was smaller. And its left wing was bent at an awkward angle and it was cradling its front right paw. Toothless crawled down from where they sat, Hiccup right behind him. The Night Fury's head shot up and growled at the approaching dragon and man. Its electric blue eyes bore into Toothless, pupils slit as far as they would go. Hiccup took a slow, deliberate step forward but backed up as the injured Night Fury roared at him. Toothless took a defensive stance in front of his rider. No one threatened his Hiccup!

The injured Night Fury looked around itself frantically and struggled to stand. It yelped as it flexed its wing and growled when Toothless tried to approach. It limped heavily over to the side of the cove, not daring to turn its back on the other Night Fury and the man beside him. It carefully flapped its good wing and began crawling its way up the side, smearing blood on the white rocks behind it.

"Stop! You'll hurt yourself even more!" Hiccup cried as Toothless growled in a friendly way. The bleeding Night Fury slipped and crashed down painfully on its busted wing. Its ear-splitting screech of pain forced Hiccup to cover his ears. It turned to Toothless and whimpered. Toothless replied with a low grumble and motioned Hiccup to mount him.

Hiccup jumped on and strapped himself down without question and Toothless flew over to the injured Night Fury and slowly, carefully, wrapped his paws around its middle. It whimpered in pain again and slowly, carefully, Toothless and Hiccup flew up and over the edge of the cove.

"We have to get it back to the village ok Buddy?" Hiccup leaned over to look at the injured Night Fury dangling from Toothless' paws. Blood oozed slowly from one of its ears. Just as they passed the beginning the ruins of the crash landing, the injured Night Fury began roaring painfully and squirming in Toothless' grasp. The larger black dragon slowed and landed carefully before he dropped the squirming dragon who roared painfully into the woods. Hiccup hopped off Toothless as the other Night Fury crawled over rock and fallen trees. It roared again painfully looking around frantically.

The dragon must have found what it was looking for because it roared again before struggling up past a group of dead trees to a small clearing laced with mossy stones. It smeared blood as it went but it didn't seem to mind as it crawled frantically to the clearing. It was then Hiccup finally saw what the dragon was heading towards.

A tuft of red hair and a hand peeked over the white rocks.

"Oh mighty Thor," he whispered before darting forward to watch the injured Night Fury carefully nudge at the unconscious girl that lay crumbled over the mossy stones.

2. Chapter 2

**I LIIIIIVE! I am alive and on fire baby! Sorry about the long wait, but here it is! Another beautiful chapter posted! Maybe now Toothless

won't try to eat me or set me on fire anymore. It was really awkward to explain to my landlord why my apartment was on fire when I don't even own a stove. (I live in a place with a shared kitchen down the hall.)**

Anyway, ON WITH THE SHOW!

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It took several hours to convince the injured Night Fury to come to the village for help. Toothless couldn't carry both the girl and the dragon and the dragon refused to leave the unconscious girl's side. So Hiccup and Toothless flew to the village as fast as they could for back up when they met Astrid and the group walking towards the Dragon Training stadium. Toothless came in for a less than perfect landing and Hiccup scrambled off the black dragon.

"What's going on?" Astrid was the first to speak. Snotlout, Ruffnut and Tuffnut and Fishlegs murmured in agreement. It wasn't everyday they saw Hiccup like this. After a quick explanation, the group set off to Raven Point.

When they found the clearing, the injured dragon had moved the girl off the rocks and was cradling her, good wing draped over her like a protective blanket. It growled menacingly at the sight of the other dragons, tightening its hold on the girl as the humans approached. Fishlegs could barely contain his excitement.

"It's a female Night Fury! Hiccup, it's a female Night Fury!" he all but squealed at the Chief's son, who looked at him in shock.

"A female? How do you know?" he looked from the female Night Fury to Toothless. Fishlegs puffed up his chest.

"Females are always smaller than the males and they have noticeably longer tailfins," he smiled happily, "see the size difference?" It was true. The injured Night Fury was much smaller compared to Toothless.

"What's that she's holding?" Snotlout wondered out loud taking a step back as the female dragon growled low in her throat.

"A girl. I think she might have been the rider," Hiccup inched closer, Toothless at his heels just in case the female thought to do something stupid, like attack. She growled but that was all.

"Alright dragon, I'm gonna need you to help us out okay?" he ease the wing open revealing the girl. She was bleeding from a cut on the head, the red life mixing in with her red hair. She was covered in dirt, bruises and scratches and her middle was soaked with blood. The dragon whined low in her throat and nudged the girl's head softly. Hiccup smiled and reached forward, grabbing the girl gently and gave her to Fishlegs to hold. He and his Gronkle, Meatlug would fly the girl home. Hiccup and Snotlout would carry the injured Night Fury home while the rest made sure to catch anyone on case they fell.

The female Night Fury whined as Fishlegs hovered, holding the girl

close. She was clearly worried about the safety of her rider. Hiccup mounted Toothless and Snotlout hopped on his Nightmare, Hookfang. Together the whole group made their way back to the village where the people sat high alert. The famous Viking Heroes didn't just disappear without warning unless something had happened. The female Night Fury immediately began growling at anyone who came too close, attempting to stand but failing miserably.

"What's all this here?" Stoic roared as he made his way through the crowd. The injured Night Fury sent a small blast of fire at Stoic's feet as he got too close to the red-headed girl, stopping him in his tracks. She growled low in her throat and crawled over to the girl, still held by Fishlegs. Hiccup ran to his father, stepping in between him and the female dragon.

"They're both injured. This dragon is afraid for her rider," he said as the village healer came running forward, ignoring the growling dragon before leaned over the unconscious girl. She stroked her face, measured her breathing and checked her pulse. The female Night Fury growled louder this time and the healer took her staff and bonked the black dragon on the head with a loud _'bonk!_' The dragon blinked and stared stunned at the old woman.

"Oh hush up! She's alive but needs me'ical attention right now! Fishlegs, if yeh'll take her to mah house," the old lady motioned Fishlegs to follow but stopped at the panicked roar of the injured dragon. The healer eyed the black, bleeding dragon before shrugging and pointed to Stoic and Gobber standing in the crowd with a wrinkly old finger, "You two! Carry de poor beast to mah house as well. If dis one 'ere is anythin' like Toothless, she'll wanna stay by her rider's side," she smiled and hobbled her way to her house as Stoic and Gobber carefully carried the injured dragon; Hiccup ran along saying calm things to the spooked dragon but her attentions were on the girl in Fishlegs' arms.

The dragon had not moved since the girl had been taken care of and was now resting next to the unconscious girl's bed. She lay curled around the bed, black head resting beside the girl's arm. After they had brought her in, the old healer had shoo'd all the men out to care and clean the young girl. Astrid had been allowed to stay and help, fetching the water, sending for more bandages and holding the dragon down as the healer stitched up several of the larger cuts.

Never had Astrid, in all of her dragon training from before dragons were friends, seen so much blood. The bandages soaked up the red liquid and the water had to be changed regularly. The room stank of the coppery stench and it was so thick in the air, Astrid could have sworn she tasted the iron on her tongue. But the healer either ignored it or was so used to it she didn't notice for she continued to work, smearing healing balms of different colors on the cuts, stitching up the larger wounds and bandaging them, all in less than an hour.

After the healer had finished her work, she stepped out and let in Hiccup and Toothless. The male Night Fury inched forward and nudged the girl slightly. The female growled quietly but made no move to stop them. Hiccup took a seat beside Astrid and silently watched the dragons watch the unconscious girl.

She had blood red hair tied back into a thick plait, courtesy of the

healer, that hung over her shoulder down to her waist. What skin wasn't marred by dark bruises was pale, dusted lightly with freckles across her button nose. Bandages wrapped around her forehead and most of her arms. The blanket covered everything else so Hiccup didn't know what sort of injuries the girl had.

"What do you think happened to her?" Astrid broke the silence, staring at the sleeping girl in the bed. Hiccup shrugged.

"She had to get 25 stitches across her stomach," Astrid continued, "and 19 on her back. Because of three long claw marks. Three!" Astrid sighed and held her head in her hands, "There was so much blood." Hiccup looked shocked, from Astrid to the girl lying in bed.

44 stitches total?! Hiccup looked to see the female Night Fury nudge the girl's arm, looking like a kicked puppy.

It was the next day before the girl finally woke up. And the first thing she'd done was attack the first person she saw, Gobber. Poor Gobber had just come into the healer's house to get some medicine for his stump of a leg. She'd awoken and promptly grabbed the fire poker and banged Gobber over the head with it. Luckily he was wearing his helmet but it still sent him to the ground, dazed as a new-born babe. The girl ran for the door, her dragon on her heels and yanked it open only to be blinded by the sudden sunlight. The people walking around doing their own thing stopped and stared at the girl holding a poker. Hiccup was among the spectators.

"Hey you're finally up? How are you fee-Whoa!" he stepped back just in time to keep his head. The girl swung the poker at him, falling into a defensive stance he didn't recognize. Her moment didn't last long as Toothless bounded out from wherever he'd been hiding, knocking the girl flat on her back; the poker flew out of her hands and slid beyond her reach. The girl froze under the Night Fury, staring up into its green eyes, pupils slit like a cat's. Her dragon growled at Toothless but lowered herself to the ground. This seemed to calm the girl and Hiccup pushed Toothless off her.

"Hey you ok?" Hiccup offered the girl a hand up but she leaned on her dragon as she stood. She nodded and looked around petting her dragon absentmindedly.

"Where am I?"

3. Chapter 3

****I am back and welcome my avid readers with ANOTHER CHAPTER! Wohoo! I'm not dead yet! Anyway, new chapter, more fun! Remember, every time I get a review, Toothless gets a cookie!****

****Disclaimer: I do not own How To Train Your Dragon! (Although I wish I did...)****

****Enjoy!****

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"-then we found you passed out in the forest at Ravens Point. We brought you back here and then you woke up. You've been out for several days now," Hiccup sat and explained.

Stoic the Vast and his son were sitting in the healer's house across from the bed where the girl, Alani, lay. After the scene in front of the healer's house earlier, Alani had calmed down and the healer, and her dragon Spitfire, ushered her back inside to check on her stitches. As the Chief and Soon-To-Be-Chief, Stoic and Hiccup were allowed inside to fill Alani in on what happened. Alani gaped at Hiccup as she processed everything that had happened.

"Whatcha remember 'fore yeh crash-landed lassie?" Stoic scooted closer. Hiccup did so too. They didn't wanna miss this. Spitfire laid her head in Alani's lap and the girl pet the dragon's head casually.

"We were flying like we usually do, practicing our moves and stuff. I remember hearing something behind us so I turned and there was this huge pack of Sky Serpents coming at us," she read their baffled expressions and explained, "I don't think you guys have them here. Sky Serpents are like large snakes with wings and usually they're really peaceful. My village considered them Odin's Blessed Messengers before it was destroyed by the messengers themselves, though they're usually really peaceful," she took a deep breath and continued, "The serpents chased us far over the ocean, farther than Spitfire and I have ever gone. We thought they'd stop but they just kept going at us, attacking with their lightning and fire. We saw land and flew faster to escape but then I think I passed out cause I don't remember anything after that," she looked at Spitfire who rubbed her head against her hands, begging to be pet some more. Stoic ran a large hand through his beard and hmm'd. Hiccup racked his brain for anything that could sum up the un-called blacking out. Alani didn't seem like the type to just pass out for no reason. Both Stoic and Hiccup were stumped.

"What happened right before you passed out? Do you remember?" Hiccup asked, "You were flying towards Berk, then what?" Alani's eyebrows furrowed and she struggled to remember.

"I thinkâ€¦yeah definitely! We were over the coastline when I heard a weird sound, the kind that you feel deep in your entire body? _Right_ before I passed out," she looked up at Hiccup hopefully.

Coastline, weird sound. Coastline, weird sound, unconsciousness. Hiccup racked his brain for anything. Was it a dragon? Could be, there was that one that could kill a man at close range with some kinda sonic-

Hiccup shot up and ran towards the door.

"Be right back. I think I might've figured something out!" he called over his shoulder and was gone.

Hiccup ran through the village looking for the one huge dragon expert he knew. Fishlegs wasn't at the training grounds, he wasn't at the forge, and he wasn't at home. Where could that fat, dragon-loving idiot have gone off to? Hiccup nearly slapped himself. Dragon-lover = Dragon stables! Of course! Where else would he be? The place where all the dragons slept and lived when they weren't allowed inside the

houses.

Hiccup ran to the stables and sure enough, there sat Fishlegs talking to his Gronkle.

"Fishlegs! What kinda dragon emits a concussive sound and lives around the coastline?"

Fishlegs looked slightly startled at the 'greeting' but answered nonetheless.

"The Thunder Drum of course! Why do you ask?"

"Great! Ok another quick question, if you're far enough away from it, could it potentially knock you out?"

"Well yeah. But if you're too close you could die, Hiccup? Where're you going?" Hiccup yelled something over his shoulder but he was already too far away.

When he returned to the healer's house he knocked twice before opening the door. Spitfire was eating a basketful of fish while Toothless looked on hopefully. The healer had come back into the room with food for Alani and her dragon. The dragon was apparently also a patient but all her injuries were almost healed. Spitfire's wing was a little sore and threatened to bite off the healer's hand one time she'd prodded a tad too hard. But other than that, she was 'right as rain' as Alani had put it. '_How could rain be right?_' he thought, '_Strange.'_

Alani sat up in her bed, bowl of warm soup, fresh baked bread and a large leg of meat sitting in her lap. She was tearing into it hungrily, just like Spitfire and her fish. Hiccup took his seat and waited for the girl to swallow. When she did, she looked at him, waiting for whatever he was going to say.

"You might have run across a territorial Thunder Drum," he spoke and Alani nodded, as if that made a lot more sense to her now. Stoic was bewildered.

"What of the sky serpents that were chasin' yeh?" Stoic asked.

"They must've left us alone after that. Passed out after that, remember?" she smiled not unkindly and Stoic murmured in embarrassment.

"Well deary, all yer stitches an' wounds seem t'be holdin' up," the healer walked back into the room, "Yeh can go on outside if yer reeeall careful, ya hear?" the old woman chuckled as Alani nearly jumped out of bed in her excitement and cringed slightly as she stretched the newly healed skin.

"Hey," Alani pulled Hiccup's sleeve lightly getting his attention, "Think you can show me around? I need to thank your friends for helping me and Spitfire." Hiccup nodded and led the way.

"There's the forge where we make all our stuff for the dragons and such," Hiccup pointed to the forge he worked at before the battle with the Queen Dragon. Well, he still worked there but it wasn't his only occupation anymore. Gobber was in there as usual, banging and

clanging and the moment his eyes landed on Alani, started complaining about the headache she'd given him. Alani grimaced as she apologized over and over again. She had been in fight mode before she passed out so when she woke upâ€¦yeah. Spitfire's saddle was damaged beyond repair from the crash so Gobber offered to make her another one. Ecstatic, Alani drew up her old saddle's design. It was a small thing, about half the size of Toothless' own, with light padding in the seat and firm stirrup-like footholds. All-in-all it was a strange design compared to what the Isle of Berk could offer but Alani said it was designed for maximum agility. Spitfire being a female was built to be more agile in the air while Toothless was built to be faster. So the saddle worked perfectly for Spitfire.

The two were just headed to the dragon training area, dragons following behind when Snotlout and Tuffnut shouted for them to join the 'cool' group. As soon as they got there, Snotlout stepped up to Alani and wiggled his eyebrows at her.

"Hey there. The name's Snotlout. What's yours?" he grinned in a way he must have thought was seductive. Alani took an unconscious step back with a strained smile on her face.

"Uh hi, I'm Alani? I wanted to thank you guys for helping me and Spitfire out back there," she smiled past Snotlout who was trying to get her attention at the group. Tuffnut came forward pushing Snotlout out of the way.

"No problem. There is nothing the greatest Viking in the world can't do-

"Oh yeah tough guy? How 'bout a bath?" his sister joked in the background. Everyone giggled; even Alani and Tuffnut's face glowed red. Fishlegs scampered up to Spitfire examining her as best he could without her growling warningly at him.

"So where'd you find Spitfire. I hear females are rare, even amongst the Night Fury species!" Fishlegs squealed happily as Spitfire took a curious step forward to sniff him. Probably smelt like fish by the happy gurgling from deep in the dragon's throat before sniffing him some more. Alani giggled again; unaware that everyone's eyes were on her waiting for her answer.

"Actually, I didn't find her. She found me," Spitfire slipped forward and nudged her head into the red-head's shoulder. Alani giggled and reached up to scratch her behind the ears; "After my parents died I was thrown into the wild to die. But Spitfire found me and we've been together ever since." The girl nuzzled her cheek against Spitfire's scaly head and she purred deeply, "In truth she's almost like the mother I never had!"

Spitfire snorted and stepped back huffing. Alani furrowed her brow and crossed her arms.

"Well you are! Almost," she laughed at the dragon that shook her head grumpily, stomping the ground with her paw. Hiccup and Astrid bit back laughter at the dragon's behavior. Snotlout and Tuffnut both walked up to Alani in slight awe.

"You can understand her?" Tuffnut asked, seemingly impressed. Alani's already fair skin paled somewhat forcing her freckles to stand out

more.

"No!" she exclaimed loudly causing everyone to stare in slight shock. Alani blushed almost the same shade as her vibrant red hair, "We've just been together for a while, right girl?" she rubbed Spitfire behind the ear and the dragon cooed happily, "So what do you guys do around here for fun?"

"Well when I'm not battling the greatest dragon of all time," Snotlout bragged stepping closer to Alani who took another tentative step back, "I work out in my parent's basement. You should come watch one of these days," he wiggled his eyebrows and Hiccup motioned Alani to follow him which she gratefully did.

"We'll head over to the Dragon Training arena. You can meet the rest of the dragons there," he smiled. Toothless chirped lightly behind him, talking to Spitfire. Alani looked back towards Snotlout slightly confused.

"Wait, you still live with your parents?" Alani asked surprised. It was Ruffnut who answered her question, pushing past Snotlout who was still trying to get her attention.

"Yeah, we don't move out till we're married or drive our parents crazy," she rolled her eyes and shoved her brother away from the crimson-haired girl. Alani looked confused at Ruffnut.

"Don't you back in your village?" Astrid asked walking next to her. Alani shook her head.

"The young are usually kicked out of their homes when they come of age, usually after 17 or 18 winters," she said as they came upon the gate that led into the arena. Astrid looked confused with Alani's village life.

"So how old are you Alani?" Astrid asked, greeting Stormfly, her Deadly Nadder, in the arena. Alani thought for a moment.

"Well if I remember correctly, I'll be 18 winters this year," she smiled as Stormfly nudged her gently, sniffing the newcomer. They entered the gates leading to the great arena where the dragons gathered around their masters excitedly.

"Wow that's almost the same as us!" Ruffnut exclaimed, "Tuff and I are both 18 winters even though I was born before him," she grinned. Tuffnut scoffed loudly.

"Was not! I was!" he shoved his sister towards wall.

"Was too!" she shouted back before tackling Tuffnut to the ground.

"Was _not_!"

"Was _too_!"

Hiccup placed a hand on Alani's shoulder and smiled a little ashamed of the twins' behavior who were now wrestling and rolling about on the floor. Their dragon, a Hideous Zippleback named Barf and Belch, watched them scuffle across the floor, chuckling deeply.

"They'll be like that for a while. C'mon, I'll introduce you to the rest of the dragons. You already know Stormfly by the looks of it," he laughed as Stormfly nudged Alani, begging to be pet by the newcomer. Alani giggled as Stormfly's breath ruffled her hair. Fishlegs came up to the side, Meatlug behind him.

"This is Meatlug, the best friend you can ever find in a dragon," he gushed and hugged the Gronkle. Toothless, who had joined the group and stood behind Hiccup, rolled his eyes and eyed Spitfire, who was standing behind Alani. Spitfire was still slightly wary of the other dragons touching her rider but she allowed it seeing how friendly the larger dragons were.

Snotlout shoved Fishlegs and Meatlug out of the picture proudly presenting his Monstrous Nightmare, Hookfang.

"Bah! Gronkles' got nuthin' on Hookfang here!" Snotlout exclaimed as Hookfang leaned down his long neck to examine the newcomer and her dragon. Spitfire let out a short warning shriek and stepped in front of Alani, forcing her back.

"Hey girl, whoa! It's ok," the crimson-haired girl tapped Spitfire on the head pushing her gently out of the way, "I don't think this one's gonna attack me." Alani reached up a tentative hand up towards Hookfang who sniffed carefully and stared at the girl before him.

"What do you mean 'this one's not gonna attack'?" Snotlout asked from atop his perch on Hookfang's neck. Alani struggled to answer in a way that wouldn't upset the dragon who was observing her carefully.

"A long time ago, after I met Spitfire, I was attacked by a Monstrous Nightmare. My legs got burned pretty bad and Spitfire didn't know what to do. We couldn't go back to my village for help so—" she trailed off sadly and squeaked when Hookfang closed the distance between them and nudged the little one in front of him. Alani relaxed and pet the red dragon that began purring under her touch. Snotlout smirked at Tuffnut who now sported a nicely forming black eye, courtesy of his sister. Tuffnut replied by kicking Hookfang who promptly bucked Snotlout right off his back. Tuffnut's snorting laughter came to an abrupt stop as Alani squeaked loudly and jumped back from the raging Nightmare, tripping over Spitfire's tail and landing hard on her back with a cry.

Spitfire shot up and roared, hissing at the Nightmare, flapping her large wings dangerously. The black dragon looked twice her size standing on her hind legs, wings beating the air furiously, teeth bared and claws extended. Hookfang froze in his tantrum and calmed, stooping low to the ground and crawling back in a sign of submission. Spitfire hissed again and turned to help Alani up while keeping a wary eye on the red dragon. Hiccup and Astrid rushed to help but a warning hiss from Spitfire stopped them in their tracks. Hiccup glanced over at his own Night Fury, surprised he wasn't getting involved. Usually if there was any threat to Hiccup, be it large or small, Toothless would always have interfered in one way or another. Instead, the male Night Fury sat there, staring from Alani and Spitfire to Hookfang who was standing in a corner looking ashamed of himself.

"Its ok girl, I'm fine," the red-head calmed her dragon by petting her soothingly on the head. The dragon's hissing soon turned to concerned grumbles as Spitfire walked around Alani inspecting her from head to toe for any damage. Seeing none, the dragon happily nudged her rider and purred. Alani laughed. In his head, Hiccup could practically see the gears in his head whirring before it clicked. Female dragon, mothering instinct. Spitfire was only protecting her 'hatchling', Alani. He let out a breath of a laugh.

"Hey are you ok?" Fishlegs, Tuffnut and Ruffnut asked. Alani nodded and dusted herself off.

"Bad dragon! Very bad dragon!" Snotlout yelled at Hookfang who stared past his rider at Spitfire and Alani.

"Snotlout, don't be like that. Can't you see he's already regretting what he did?" Fishlegs shouted at the Nightmare's rider. Snotlout was about to say something when he noticed the way his dragon slumped sadly. Hookfang was indeed regretting his outburst that almost injured the little red one. Sighing, Snotlout reached up and grabbed the Nightmare's head and pet him gently.

"Don't do that again ya'hear?" he scolded softly. Hookfang grumbled and lifted his rider into the air with a sound that almost sound like laughter. The group smiled at the dragon and rider. Astrid cleared her throat and directed Alani to the two-headed dragon bickering with itself.

"Last but not least, this is Barf and Belch, the twins' dragons. Don't ask me which head is which, I can't tell them apart," Astrid chuckled lightly as Ruffnut literally dragged Tuffnut away from the wall he was leaning against, dropping him to the floor when she reached her dragon.

"The left head is Belch, and the right one is Barf!" she exclaimed proudly, patting 'Belch' on the neck. Tuffnut jumped up from where his sister had dropped him scowling.

"That's not it! The left head is Barf, the right side is Belch!" he corrected smugly. Astrid steered Alani away from the bickering siblings before she unwillingly became part of the struggle. Barf and Belch watched amusedly, bickering playfully with one another. If there was anyone with a dragon that suited them, the twins and their dragon would definitely take the cake.

"So where are you from anyway?" Astrid asked, sitting across from the crimson-haired rider leaning against the wall. The group had been sitting on the sidelines watching their dragons mingle and chatter with each other, getting to know the newest member, Spitfire. Except for the twins; they were still rolling around on the ground screaming obscenities at each other that would have left a sailor blushing like a love-struck school girl.

"From the South. It's beautiful from what I remember of it. A lot warmer too," she grinned jokingly. The twins pushed their way into the circle. It looked as if they'd stopped fighting on their own terms but judging by the ring of shallow teeth marks lining their torsos, Barf and Belch probably had something to do with it. But hey, progress was progress.

"What about your village?" Ruffnut asked, oblivious to the way Alani tensed up.

"You don't have to answer if you don't want to you know," Hiccup reassured. Alani smiled and shook her head.

"It's ok, I'm fine. My village was fairly large. A little bigger than this one actually. Very bright; there was always one festival or another going on," she smiled at the memories; "the villagers would wear bright, colorful clothing and dance and sing," Alani grinned. The gang tried imagining a place like that.

"The men of marriageable age would do everything they could to impress and woo the women. They would do acrobatics, complicated dances and even breathe fire â€" n-not the way dragons do!" she stammered hastily, "it only made you spew fire _like_ a dragon. Those men were always engaged the next day," she grinned sheepishly. The boys stared at her wide-eyed and gawking. Men that breathed fire!

"How'd they do that?!" Tuffnut and Snotlout scooted closer, not willing to miss a thing as cool as this.

"Well as far as I know, there was this special water that was highly flammable. The men would take a mouthful of the water and spray a fine mist before lighting it. Dragon's fire!" she shifted nervously under the looks the two boys was giving her.

"She's _not_ gonna teach you that," Astrid spoke up as the boys immediately began protesting loudly. Alani sighed relieved that she wouldn't have to teach someone that.

"Besides I don't even know how to do it. It was only the men who learned it to impress the women during courting season," Alani added, earning herself groans of disappointments from the boys.

"Wait so the men have to impress the women? Or else they won't get a girl?" Snotlout scoffed.

"No arranged marriages?" Astrid asked. That's was not something she'd ever heard of. Alani nodded. Hiccup frowned, deep in thought.

"So basically it's like nature?" Fishlegs asked.

Alani nodded again smiling. Snotlout, Tuffnut and Ruffnut, Hiccup and Astrid looked at Fishlegs confused.

"Well, just by observing our dragons it's the same way," Fishlegs spoke up, "The males will do a bunch of cool and dangerous things to get a females attention. Seriously, do you guys pay _any_ attention to your dragons?"

"No. That's what we have you for isn't it?" Tuffnut answered sarcastically.

Hiccup stepped in before a fight could break out, again.

"Wow that's really something Alani!" he called loudly getting everyone's attention, "Whaddaya say to going flying?" he clapped his hands eagerly and cheers broke out.

4. Chapter 4

****Ahoy there! Back and alive with another chapter! I really liked working on this chapter. But alas, writing fan fictions is only something I'm allowed to do in my free time, otherwise I'd constantly be writing my heart out. Stupid school and grown-up responsibilities! And I don't have to act mature if I don't wanna! Wah! ****

****Also, today is a double-whammy just cause I managed to have a stroke of pure writing genius over the weekend!****

****Disclaimer: I do NOT own How To Train Your Dragon! It belongs to its rightful owners!****

****Anyways, enjoy!****

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"I dunno Hiccup! It seems a pretty far way down!" Alani called over the wind. Hiccup had taken her and the group to a cliff edge where the wind was strong and there was a straight drop down to the sharp, lethal-looking rocks at the bottom. He had explained that it was here Toothless and he practiced all their tricks in the air such as free falling and the like. Even though Alani and the rest of the gang had absolutely no problem_s with heights and riding their dragons, being told to go jump off a ledge leading to certain death was, without a doubt, un-nerving.

"No problem! Trust me, its better with a long way down. More time for your dragon to catch you!" he called over the wind that roared in his ears. He watched Alani take a tentative step forward to look over the edge. She squeaked and rushed back to her dragon for comfort. Snotlout decided to go first to impress Alani. Really, the levels of desperation rolling off of this guy almost made you want to pity him. Almost. If you weren't busy laughing at him; which the twins were currently doing.

"Watch this, sweetness," he nudged Alani with his elbow and walked up to the cliff edge, Hookfang in tow.

"Woohoo!" he bellowed, throwing himself off the edge closely followed by Hookfang. Ruffnut growled and handed Tuffnut a small sack of coins. She had bet he wouldn't do it. Even though Tuffnut had bet on Snotlout actually doing it, it still baffled him to see the teen Viking jump from the edge, seemingly without a doubt. Hiccup grinned and urged the other to do the same. Ruffnut and Tuffnut went next, followed by Fishlegs and Astrid. Hiccup grinned boyishly at Alani before running off the edge with Toothless with a happy shout.

Alani watched as the two plummeted towards the rocks speed increasing as they went. After a while, Hiccup made his way through the air, smooth as glass, and re-attached himself to Toothless' saddle. The black dragon's wings shot opened and flew up in the air, hovering in the air above the cliff watching Alani debate doing the dangerous stunt. Spitfire looked like she really wanted to go, wriggling with excitement beside her rider. Ruff and Tuff flew next to Hiccup

calling to the frightened red-head.

"C'mon Alani! You can do it!" they encouraged. Alani laughed nervously stepping back, laying a hand on Spitfire's head. The black dragon nodded and the two disappeared into the forest near the cliff. Snotlout flew up to where the others had gathered, scowling when he couldn't find Alani anywhere in sight.

"Hey where's-" he was cut short as Alani, on Spitfire's back, shot out from the trees heading straight for the cliff's side. Her feet were tucked into the strange stirrups; bent over Spitfire's back riding the dragon smoothly, almost flowing like water. The dragons in the air scattered as Spitfire hurdled right off the edge into the open air. Alani pulled her feet from the stirrups and stood on the leaping dragon's back. At the peak of the jump and going along with the momentum, Alani leaped farther into the air. Hiccup and the group gasped as the girl and her dragon began their descent towards Earth.

The wind tore through Alani's hair, pulling the bands that held her hair together, whipping her crimson hair behind her wildly. Spitfire seemed happy to be in the air again, falling through the heavens head-first with her rider. Hiccup laughed and signaled the others to join the falling girl and soon six pairs of teens and dragons were diving through the air. As they got closer to the raging ocean and pointy rocks below, Fishlegs and the twin's pulled out. Next went Snotlout and Astrid. But Hiccup and Alani, the more 'seasoned' riders, kept falling. Alani was laughing joyfully and Hiccup couldn't help but smile at her.

Toothless growled over the wind tearing past his ears. That's right. It took time for him and Toothless to stabilize due to Toothless' and Hiccup's prosthetics. Time they might not have if they didn't pull back. Like now.

"Alright Toothless," Hiccup angled himself and hooked himself back into the saddle. But Alani kept falling.

"Alani!" the boy screamed over the wind, successfully getting the girl's attention. She nodded and flipped over to the dragons back with such ease and grace that Hiccup could only dream of. Alani settled herself in a strange riders' stance; not quite sitting but not quite standing either, and maneuvered Spitfire to the rock pillars below. Hiccup and Toothless followed weaving and dodging between the pillars at breakneck speeds. Alani had been right. The female Night Fury was more agile in the air than Toothless. Alani leaned and turned with her dragon with rapid last minute dodges and daring twirls, reading each other's movements, acting as one entity instead of two. The two emerged from the field of rock pillars and the two Night Furies roared happily. Hiccup laughed and looked over to Alani who was staring into the sunset cheering at the top of her lungs.

Hiccup blinked. It was so sudden he almost missed it. Her eyes! For a split second he could have sworn her sky-blue eyes flashed a vibrant gold. She turned her head, blood-red hair flapping madly in the wind like a flag, and smiled at Hiccup. Her smile radiated so much happiness that Hiccup all but forgot the golden-eyed flash and smiled back.

Hiccup signaled to the rest of the group that had flown over the rock pillars and approached them on their dragons. A few of them roared happily and followed Hiccup and Toothless to a large flat area. Toothless recognized it from his and Hiccup's first successful test flight. All the dragons landed; Alani and Spitfire a little farther from the rest to make room for Spitfire's slightly larger wingspan. As everyone descended from their dragons carefully and as graceful as you could get from a Viking, Snotlout jumped off Hookfang before he even touched the ground, landing with a smack on his face. Hiccup, Astrid and Fishlegs cringed but Ruff and Tuff snickered behind their hands. Snotlout didn't seem fazed by his *ahem* less than graceful landing and ran over to where Alani was congratulating Spitfire on an awesome performance.

"That. Was. AWESOME!" he screamed, causing Alani to jump and Spitfire to bark in surprise. He didn't notice Alani's grimace of pain as he threw his arms around her and spun her in a circle. Only when Spitfire snarled at him did he let her down grasping the red-head by her shoulders. Her sky-blue eyes were wide with pain and fear and her face had paled to the point where her freckles stood out and her red hair was more vibrant than ever.

"How did you do that?! That thing with the bending, and the turning and the riding and the-"

Astrid's fist made its acquaintance with Snotlout's face, sending him flying back into his dragon, who grumbled out something like a deep, dragon laugh. Ruffnut walked up and slung a protective arm around Alani and made cooing noises.

"Aw poor wittle Awani!" she babbled in baby-talk she'd seen her mother do with a neighbor's brat before turning her steely glare to Snotlout who was picking himself up, "Oi Snoutlout! Don't you know poor young maidens like us have a thing called personal space?" The rough blonde patted Alani's head for emphasis. Tuffnut scoffed.

"You? Maidens? Now we all now Fishlegs' here is more maidenly than any of you. Hell even Bark and Belch here are more maidenly than you are." At this, Barf (or was it Belch?), huffed angrily, snatching Tuffnut up by his collar and shook him a bit before throwing him in front of his sister who glared at him. He sat on the ground swaying slightly before smirking up at Ruffnut.

"See? Way more maidenly than-"

This time Ruffnut's fist made it acquaintance with Tuffnut's face. Astrid beamed evilly at the boy and turned to Alani, who was staring at the ground, face almost as deep as her hair. Hiccup glanced at Astrid and gently tapped her on the shoulder.

"Hey what's wrong?"

Alani looked from the ground, to Spitfire, and then finally at him.

"He's warm."

Hiccup blinked.

"What?"

"He's warm. Like really warm. I think he might be sick," she stared at Hiccup. He shot a confused look at Astrid who shrugged. She was just as confused as he was.

"Who, Snotlout? No, he's not sick, I don't think. Hey Snotlout, you sick?" Astrid called to the teen Viking who was laughing at Tuffnut even though he was sporting a rather nice black eye thanks to Astrid.

"Nope! Never been better actually," he walked up to Astrid and wiggled his eyebrows, "Why? You worried 'bout me baby?" he shrunk back at the glare she sent him.

"But you're so warm!" Alani muttered and placed a hand on his forehead.

"See it's really warm! Here, feel that!" she stepped aside as Astrid placed her hand on Snotlout's temple. Before he could enjoy the feel of Astrid's hand; that wasn't punching him, maiming him or hurting him in general, she pulled back frowning.

"He seems normal to me."

Hiccup and Fishlegs both tested Snotlout's forehead with the same results. Nothing was wrong with him. Well, except for the fact that he thought he was god's gift to women and there was absolutely no cure for that.

Alani frowned, concentrating hard. She actually looked kind of cute, her bottom lip stuck out slightly, eyes narrow in concentration and her eyebrows creased slightly in the middle.

"Hold on a sec," she murmured quietly, almost to herself. She reached up and put a hand on Hiccup's brow. She gasped.

"You're warm too!"

She darted over to Astrid and felt her forehead too.

"So are you!"

After a few hectic minutes of Alani feeling everyone's foreheads and declaring them sick, Hiccup caught on.

"Hey Alani? When was the last time you touched a human?"

The girl stopped fussing over a 'sick' Tuffnut and blinked; and blushed.

"I'm not really sure, it's been a long while," she muttered embarrassed. So far, Hiccup's theory was spot on.

"And you've only touched Spitfire and the other dragons since you came here," he observed out loud, "I think I know what's going on. Alani, we're not sick. This is a normal temperature for humans whereas dragons," he glanced at Spitfire briefly, "have a lower core body temperature."

Understanding bloomed on Alani's face and she nodded as if that made sense. Which it did; in its own not-touching-humans-and-only-dragons kind of way. This was strange in itself but after everything Alani had gone through, Sky Serpents chasing her, the Thunder Drum making her pass out, the extensive wounds she'd had and Snotlout's constant flirting (if that's what you'd call it), it was the least of her worries. She must have gotten so used to touching her cold-blooded dragon friend that it became the norm for her. So when she touched a human (or in this case, was touched by Snotlout) they must have felt warm to her. The group made an 'Aha!' noise even though some of the slower ones, namely Tuffnut and Snotlout, didn't quite understand.

Tuffnut laughed and threw an arm over Alani.

"You, just keep getting weirder and weirder. I like it," he whispered the last part before Spitfire nudged him forward and away from her precious rider. Ruffnut giggled.

"Looks like you'll have to impress her mother!" and with that Ruffnut collapsed laughing at her own little joke.

Hiccup raised an eyebrow at her behavior before shaking his head.

Spitfire huffed quietly, grumbling about being called a mother. How rude! She hadn't even had her first set of eggs yet. And that little sun-haired female with the braids that looked like worms called her a mother? True, Spitfire cared for her little red one more than anything but she wasn't the girl's mother! The female Night Fury hadn't laid Alani's egg and the girl never suckled from her. She continued to grumble as her rider continued conversing with the smart toothpick of a boy and his warrior mate.

"So that's normal for humans?" Alani repeated. Hiccup nodded. She stared at Spitfire who was eyeing Ruffnut evilly, still fuming about the 'mother' comment.

Alani's stomach growled loudly. Hiccup and Astrid laughed and motioned a red-faced Alani to follow them back to Berk for dinner. The sun dipped over the horizon as they landed in the square and they all pushed open the doors to the Great Hall where the festivities were already in full swing.

5. Chapter 5

****I'm baaaack! With another chapter with our beloved characters from HTTYD!****

****Disclaimer: I do not own How To Train Your Dragon. However, Alani and Spitfire are mine to corrupt as I please!
*Mwahahaha!*****

****Enjoy!****

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Vikings drank and sang, completely oblivious to their lack of pitch or tempo. The men who'd had a tad bit too much to drink were discussing who could hang from the ceiling candle fixtures the longest and timing each other.

Hiccup and Astrid found an open table and motioned everyone over as a barmaid brought large legs of meat and kegs of ale over for the Viking Heroes and the new addition to the Village of Berk. The healer rushed up to Alani's side surprising the red-head who squeaked and jumped, nearly knocking the table and the food over. She wasn't allowed to have any of the alcohol offered to her as it would thin out her blood and cause her wounds to reopen. The healer also ordered a healthy serving of vegetables; Snotlout and the twins visibly flinched at the word. The old lady said something about speeding up the healing process with the necessary food groups but her feebly old voice was drowned out as Stoick and Gobber began singing about Ancient Viking Heroes.

Despite the strange looks Snotlout and the twins were giving her, Alani ate the vegetables and meat and drank the water the old lady had given her. The healer had mixed up a batch of herbs and powders into the water and no one else was allowed to drink it. It was Alani's medicine.

"How can you eat that stuff?!" Snotlout yelled over the raucous singing that filled the Hall. She tilted her head to the side confused. He pointed to her vegetables. She laughed and shook her head.

"We actually eat this all the time at my village!" she called over the noise. Snotlout cringed and said something; probably insulting her village's diet, but the words faded into the background before she could hear.

Several other Vikings came up and introduced themselves to Alani. She smiled and thanked them and each man went off with a smile on their face. One Viking even had the nerve to give the poor girl a 'pat' on the back in a friendly greeting. The Viking's large rough hand scraped at the new stitches and Alani cried out as she felt the healing skin on her back tear again.

Hiccup and the gang stared in shock as blood began seeping through Alani's bandages and staining the back of her shirt. The Viking who had slapped her had wandered off, drunk as a doornail to who knows where; completely unaware of the pain he had caused, not to mention the death glares the twins were giving him.

"Hey are you ok?" Fishlegs gently laid his hand on the shaking girl's shoulder only to pull back with it covered in blood. His face paled and he started squeaking like a strangled mouse at the sight.

Astrid reacted first, jumping from the bench and ordered Snotlout, the strongest of the group besides her, to carry Alani to the healer's hut. The group half-walked half-carried the girl to the door of the Great Hall. As soon as they opened it, Spitfire rushed to her rider. She'd smelt the blood the minute the door had opened. Snarling at Snotlout, the dragon nuzzled the pale girl. Alani stood; swaying a little from the blood loss that was seeping down her back staining her clothes. Astrid and Snotlout stood at the ready to catch her in case she fell.

"It's ok girl," she murmured to her dragon. Slowly she hoisted herself into the saddle with the help of Spitfire nuzzling her along the way. Turning to the teen Vikings, she smiled weakly and tried apologizing for ruining the night when Spitfire bounded off into the night for the old lady's hut. Hiccup watched, a twinge of guilt pulled at his gut. She had been in that condition when they went flying? And then instead of just taking her to the healer's hut to eat and rest, he'd taken her to a rowdy Viking feast! He should have known better. The Vikings of Berk, among other tribes, weren't the gentlest of people, even when saying a friendly 'hello'.

"C'mon guys. Let's go make sure she'd ok," Astrid voiced Hiccup's thoughts. He smiled at her and the group made their way through the dark to the Healer's.

When they finally reached the town healer's hut they found to their surprise, Spitfire sitting outside grumbling, tail sweeping the ground irritably. The dragon cooed at the sight of the smart toothpick boy and nuzzled his hand and gestured to the hut behind her with her head. The toothpick boy smiled and nodded before knocking on the door.

"Come in!" the old woman called, voice muffled slightly by the wooden door but Hiccup heard it clear enough. He opened the door and his eyes were met with a rather large expanse of Alani's creamy white skin. She was lying on her stomach, bloody and scarred back exposed for the healer to work on. She lifted her head to him and blinked, almost willing her sight into focus on the figure in the doorway. The healer must have given her something for the pain because the poor girl grinned stupidly and collapsed back onto the table in a dead faint.

"Crap, I almost forgot!" Astrid growled, angry at herself, before she shoved everyone, including the gawking Snotlout and Tuffnut, out the door and back into the night.

"Astrid, wha-" Hiccup began but Astrid interrupted him.

"The healer has absolutely no sense of modesty for her patients," Astrid explained, "You could be as naked as the day you were born and she'd invite someone in with hesitation. Luckily Alani was lying down," she ran a hand through her hair growling at her blunder.

"Did any of you guys see what happened to her back or was that just me?" Tuffnut asked incredulously. The group turned to him, Hiccup and Astrid slightly confused. Tuffnut scowled.

"C'mon! I could not have been the only one who saw those gaping holes in her back!" he exclaimed, horror and sarcasm dripping from his words.

Hiccup glanced at Astrid. They were the only ones who knew about the severity of Alani's injuries beforehand. So it was no surprise that the rest of the gang were both shocked and surprised to find out that their new friend was injured, let alone the severity of those wounds. She had acted fine throughout the day and had showed no signs of pain during the activities.

"Oh yeah you weren't there when I told Hiccup," Astrid spoke, drawing

the teens in around her. She told them about what she'd seen when Alani first came to the village and how many stitches she'd needed. Hiccup took over after she was finished and told them what Alani had told him and his dad. All about the Sky Serpents, her village being destroyed, the Thunder Drum (realization dawned on Fishlegs as he remembered Hiccup asking him about that in a rushed manor) and when he finished, everyone stared at him in disbelief. Ruffnut broke the silence first by reaching out and decking Hiccup in the face, knocking him flat on his behind.

"Ow! What in Thor's name is your problem?!" Hiccup exclaimed massaging his bruising cheek. Astrid had jumped to her feet to defend her boyfriend when Ruff's words froze her in place.

"You knew she was this injured and you took her out _flying_?!" the girl screeched, face red in the low light coming from the healer's windows, "I'm no healer but even I know that was a stupid, idiotic move on your part Hiccup!"

Tuffnut stood next to his sister who was positively steaming from the ears. He had a solemn look on his face, something that didn't happen very often. Which meant this was pretty bad.

"For once I agree with Bug-Breath here," he motioned to his sister who didn't even react to the insult, "I mean c'mon Hiccup, you're supposed to be the smart one out of all of us here."

No one moved, both in shock and surprise, at the twin's behavior. Not only were they agreeing with each other, but what they said was true. He should have known better. He felt that guilt from earlier make itself at home in his gut, wrenching and scratching at the sides, bouncing and hopping around madly. He felt sick.

The healer's door swung open smacking Tuffnut's side. The healer stood crouched over her old staff smiling.

"She'll be ok now," the old lady's smile grew some, "Now who'd like to tell meh how in Odin's name, her wounds opened up again?"

Everyone started blabbering about whose fault it was, pointing fingers and yelling at each other. In the end, everyone got a nice lump on their head from the healer's staff.

"Now I don't care whose fault it is. But from now on till I say so, she won't be doin' anymore strenuous activities or exercises. Flying included. We all clear?"

Everyone murmured their agreements and the healer allowed the teenagers into the hut if their promised to keep it down. They all trudged in and took seats on surrounding chairs, beds and tables; wherever there was room. Fishlegs took up a bed all by himself and Ruffnut took a seat next to Alani's sleeping form, her brother leaning up against the wall behind her. Snotlout, Hiccup and Astrid sat near the table watching the healer go about her business. She left for a balm for Hiccup's bruising cheek and he saw Ruffnut out of the corner of his eye, beam proudly at her handiwork. He sighed. He had deserved that though, no matter how much it hurt.

There was a frantic scratching at the door and Snotlout went to check

it out. He'd just barely nudged the door open when Spitfire bound in, knocking him flat on his behind and rushed to Alani's bedside. She nuzzled the girl's cheek and prodded her lightly with her nose when she didn't get a reaction. Meanwhile Snotlout picked himself up from the floor grumbling about how everyone was getting knocked over today. Everyone ignored him and they went back to watching the female dragon fuss over her rider.

The door slammed open with a bang that shook the whole house as Stoick trudged in.

"What's going on here?" he yelled. Hiccup cringed at the volume.

_ 'Old Viking fall-back. When confused, yell very loud. He doesn't know any better,' _ Hiccup chastised his dad in his head.

The old healer came out from her back room, hissing and spitting like a viper, swinging her staff around madly, hitting the Village Chief several times in the face, arms and shoulders.

"Out! Out withcha, you imbecilic, red TURD!" she brandished her staff once more before Stoick glanced at Alani's bed where the girl slumbered peacefully on her stomach. She'd received another set of stitches and her bandages had been replaced with clean, white ones. The Chief blushed, grumbled something that might have sounded like an apology, and slumped into a nearby bed.

After a moment of silence, Stoick spoke up.

"Soâ€|her wounds reopened?" he asked his son and the healer. The old woman smiled and nodded.

"Yeah I figured," he spoke softly. Hiccup opened his mouth to ask something when Stoick continued.

"I saw you six rush outta the Great Hall like you had a demon on yer tails while carrying Alani," he explained without lifting his head.

Silence fell again with the exception of Spitfire who was still purring sadly at the lack of movement from her rider.

Alright, so while Spitfire had never actually laid Alani's egg, the girl was just as good as her own young. They'd been through everything together and Spitfire had taken care of Alani since she had found her wandering around in the woods at the tender age of six years old. The dragoness had been a major part of raising the little hatchling without scales to grow up to be big and strong. True, learning to care of such a fragile thing was taxing in the beginning but in the end, hadn't Alani turned out to be a wonderful hatchling? So, again, while the dragon wasn't her _mother_ mother, Spitfire still loved her little red hatchling without qualms. As if she were her own. And seeing her this way; hurt and bandaged tore at her still-beating heart.

The gang and Stoick stayed where they were, scattered all over the healer's house till the old lady finally kicked them out, telling them to go home and sleep. They could come back tomorrow. Hiccup threw one last glance at Alani lying pale-faced and helpless on her

bed before following his father home. Tomorrow would be different. Hiccup felt a weight in his stomach as he replayed Tuffnut's words from earlier.

'_â€|you're supposed to be the smart one out of all of us here.'_

Tuffnut was right. He really should have known better.

6. Chapter 6

****Aaaaand I am back in my small apartment in Denmark! Christmas with my family in the US was absolutely fan-fucking-tastic! I nearly got head-trauma from all the hugs I got when I arrived at the airport. My old man nearly started bawling while we were there and my mum was just laughing at him. And the best part: life in my family home went on as if I'd never even left. Very homey, comforting and familiar. It was nice. I fought with my siblings, suffered from jet-lag and assisted in the ripping, tearing and shredding of X-mas paper on X-mas Day. Got some el-neat-o stuff too. (Lol, Spanglesh!)****

****BUT as nice as the holidays were, there is real life to return to. School, responsibilities, and a fridge full of expired food. (My carrots were growing and I didn't even bother opening my milk. It wasn't moving when I shook it. XD) However, returning to my humble abode doesn't have to be so bad. I have been reunited with my beloved husband and so I will be able to write and update my stories in a somewhat regular fashion. So enough of the chit-chat, ON WITH THE STORY!****

****Disclaimer: I do NOT own HTTYD in any way, shape or form. If I did...honestly I have no idea what I'd do with it. A less violent girlfriend for Hiccup? Another female character? I dunno.****

****Enjoy!****

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The next day, Hiccup and Astrid headed towards the healer's house in the early hours of the morning. Hiccup yawned loudly, not getting much in the way of sleep last night. He'd felt too guilty and it had eaten at him, causing him to toss and turn all night till Toothless growled in his corner of the room and swatted at the boy with his one tailfin. Astrid had been on her way over to the healer's to see how Alani was doing when she saw Hiccup heading the same way so they walked side-by-side in silence. Hiccup yawned again.

"Sleep well?" Astrid asked sarcastically. Hiccup made a face and they laughed.

"What's so funny?" a voice behind them asked. Hiccup and Astrid turned to see Ruff and Tuff exiting their house and walking towards them. Ruffnut wasted no time in glaring at the Chief's son; still mad about yesterday he figured.

"Ruff? Tuff? What in Odin's Great Name are you two doing up so

early?" Astrid asked shocked, "You two don't usually wake till noon!"

The twins shrugged nonchalantly and began walking towards the healer's. Soon after, Fishlegs and Snotlout joined them and the whole group was gathered in front of the little hut where Alani currently lay. Astrid stepped forward.

"Wait right here. I'm gonna go make sure she'd decent, unlike last time," the blonde mumbled under her breath before knocking and disappearing inside the hut. Grumbling was heard and something was scrapped across the floor. If Astrid's 'Where are her clothes?!' question was anything to go by, then Alani was not 'decent'.

After a few minutes, Astrid opened the door for the group and the all trudged in. Alani was sitting up in her bed, sipping a milk-and-honey concoction the old lady had come up with and chewing on a sweet roll. Alani smiled at them as they came in, waving a sweet roll in their direction. Spitfire lifted her head from her hiding place, under Alani's bed and chirped cheerfully at the guests.

"Hey guys, what's going on?" the red-haired girl asked. Ruff and Tuff sat on the bed beside her and began chatting about what they should do today, things that wouldn't involve reopening any wounds. Alani blushed slightly and apologized for ruining their day.

"It's no big deal," Tuffnut nodded, cracking his neck, "What bothers me is that you didn't even tell us about your injuries."

Alani stopped smiling and stared at her sweet roll sadly.

"I didn't want to ruin your fun," Alani started. Spitfire nudged the girl's hand slightly before stealing one of the sweet rolls off her platter.

The gang stared.

"Well I guess if you look at it the right way, you did ruin our fun by not telling us," Tuffnut stated plainly, not missing the way Alani stiffened under their gaze, "I mean with the blood and the feast yesterday and keeping us all worried all night."

Astrid shut the male twin up forcefully.

"What he's trying to say is: you really worried us yesterday. Although I guess Hiccup and I could've told them everything beforehand. Maybe then you wouldn't have had to get stitched up again," she finished smiling kindly at the crimson-haired girl. Alani smiled sadly, but in understanding. She brightened and looked them each in the eye.

"So what are we gonna go do today?"

She caught the looks everyone gave her.

"-that won't hurt me," she added.

The group visibly relaxed and Alani laughed. Spitfire looked around the room at the sound. Figuring everything was alright by the smile on Alani's face, Spitfire slid out from under the girl's bed and made

her way out to Toothless hanging out outside by the window looking in. As much as he wanted to be inside where Hiccup and his friends were, the great black dragon knew better. There was only so much room in the healer's house and Toothless knew enough to not squeeze his way inside with so many people already in there. He chirped happily when Spitfire nudged open the door and slid out into the open.

Even though Toothless had never seen another Night Fury, not even his parents, Spitfire was something to behold. Her scales were as black as his and shone whenever she moved. She moved with a grace that he guessed could only be achieved through her being a female. Smaller limbs and body with the elongated tailfins and wings played a great deal in her higher agility. She was beautiful; there was no other way for Toothless to describe her. A warm bubbly feeling erupted somewhere in his stomach, like he was about to spew his deadly purple fire, only he wasn't. He felt his heartbeat speed up as Spitfire's blue eyes met his acid-green ones.

Meanwhile inside the healer's house, the gang was trying to come up with ideas on how to spend the day that didn't include Alani getting hurt further than she already was. Needless to say, they were coming up short. Everything everyone suggested involved moving in ways that would definitely the injured red-head.

Ruff and Tuff had suggested arm-wrestling but that was quickly shot down.

Astrid thought about sharpening hers and others' weapons but Alani couldn't even pick up the sharpening-stone without pulling at the newly-stitched skin.

Snotlout told Alani that she could come watch him work out but the gang declined, some more harshly than others.

"Damn," Ruffnut scoffed at the lack of good ideas flowing through the room, "This is harder than I thought. Who knew most of our games meant moving so much."

Hiccup laughed lightly. It was true; most of the games the Viking teens played were very much into the extensive activities and not something Alani would be doing for some time. A very long time if her wounds were to reopen again.

"How 'bout we take her out into the forest and draw? Spitfire could carry her out there and drawing doesn't require much movement," Fishlegs spoke up. The twins, Snotlout and Astrid all looked at each other. It was true that drawing wouldn't hurt Alani; the thought of sitting around all day drawing (something they were absolutely horrible at) bored them to death. But it was the only suggestion and by the smile on Alani's face, she thought it was a marvelous idea. Much better than arm-wrestling or watching Snotlout work out.

So not 5 minutes later, after convincing the healer what they were going to do would NOT hurt Alani, they were on their way towards the forest. Hiccup lead the way towards the cove where he had first found Toothless and where they had met Spitfire. The female Night Fury was slowly making her way around large moss covered boulders and fallen trees with Alani on her back. The ride was smooth but every now and then Alani would wince as she stretched or pulled at the stitches on her back. All the while, Fishlegs and Tuffnut would pepper her with

questions about her home.

Alani came from an island in the far South, a warm and humid climate; completely different from the Isle of Berk, which was cold and harsh. If it weren't for the clothes donated to her by Astrid and Ruffnut, Alani would have frozen a long time ago. The island she came from was rich with natural treasures.

Before her parents died when she was 6 winters old, she had been part of a Pearl-Diving training team. She and others her age would practice diving to the bottom of the warm ocean floor and search for clams, conches and other shellfish that hid treasures within. Granted the teams never actually managed to bring up any of the oceans goodies, it was only practice. Alani had been the only one to ever manage to get to the floor of the clear-blue ocean before she had to come back up for air. Her parents had been so proud of her that day.

At this, she had the attention of every Viking teen in their group. Clam-diving was a preposterous idea; absolutely ridiculous! Sure all the Vikings learned to swim from a very early age but that was so they wouldn't drown, not to dive down the ocean floor to gather up things. That and the water this far North was too cold to swim in for long unless you were a big beefy Viking like Hiccup's dad, Stoick. But if wasn't for fun as Alani described it. Swimming in the ocean surrounding the Isle of Berk was only a test of endurance and strength; a show of who was strongest.

"What about the Sky Snakes that attacked you?" asked Snotlout out of curiosity. Neither he nor any of the other Vikings had ever heard of such a dragon. Alani giggled slightly and slid down off Spitfire with help from Tuffnut. They had finally reached the cove and were making themselves comfortable around Alani as the girl continued her tale.

"They're called Sky Serpents," Alani smiled. Snotlout's cheeks turned a light pink in embarrassment, "They're beautiful dragons that only Odin can control. Once a year, my village would set out offerings of pearls and food and other things. The Sky Serpents would take the offerings and fly off into the sky to Odin's palace to present him with our gifts and he would bless our island home with both peace and prosperity," Alani smiled, eyes glazed over in memories, "There would be great parties and feasts after the Sky Serpents left for Odin's palace. If the Serpents took the offerings it meant that Odin was pleased and he'd bless us for another year," Alani stared down at her hands, the smile disappearing off her face, "But then the Sky Serpents attacked my village and killed my parents. After that, I was seen at the reason why Odin's messengers attacked us; I became the cursed child and was run out of my home. Not long after that, I met Spitfire and she took me under her wing."

The red-haired girl chuckled at the play on words, but it was hollow.

Hiccup 'hmm'ed thoughtfully and then whipped out his sketchbook and handed it to her. She took it and eyed his confusedly.

"Think you can draw a Sky Serpent? It'd be great if we could add one in our dragon book," the son of the chief smiled kindly and Alani swallowed.

"What?" Hiccup asked. Alani looked at him and back to the sketchbook.

"I'm not very good at drawing."

Hiccup smiled.

"No problem. Just get the basics down and we can take it from there ok?"

Alani nodded and opened to a fresh page in Hiccup's sketchbook.

While Alani set to work on drawing the Sky Serpent, Hiccup took a moment to look at Alani; I mean really look at the across from him. He hadn't had time to do it before because she had been injured and there were tons of things keeping his mind occupied. Her red hair had been pulled back into a braid again, small strands of crimson escaping the hair-do swaying slightly in the breeze. Her sky-blue eyes darted back and forth across the page, losing herself in the picture she was drawing. Her freckled nose twitched and the girl stopped drawing for a second to scratch it before diving right back where she left off.

Hiccup sighed and rose from the ground. Alani looked up startled at the sudden movement. Seeing that nothing was wrong she smiled and went back to her drawing.

Hiccup walked over to where Astrid and the rest of the gang were talking about what Alani said about her island home.

"Doesn't it sound fantastic?" Ruffnut gushed, "Warm, sandy beaches and water you can swim in without freezing!" She closed her eyes and giggled at the thought.

While Ruffnut went off into her own little world, Snotlout and Tuffnut were excitedly chatting with each other about having some of the men from her village teach them how to spit fire like a dragon. That would surely get them a whole horde of girls.

"We'll be so popular with the ladies, we'll have to beat 'em off with a stick!" Snotlout exclaimed happily, butting heads with Tuffnut who grinned stupidly.

"Yeah and if all the girls on the island look anything like Alaniâ€|" he let the sentence hang, probably because he didn't know what say after that.

Astrid noticed Hiccup walking towards them and stepped towards him.

"Hey. Whatcha think 'bout Alani's home? Sounds cool doesn't it?" the blonde rested her hands on her hips, looking past him at Alani sitting by her tree drawing. Spitfire was leaning over the red-head's shoulder watching her intently, big blue eyes following the movements of the pencil.

Hiccup followed Astrid's gaze and nodded.

"It sounds really cool. Almost makes you wanna go visit, huh?" Hiccup asked. Astrid contemplated the notion but before she could get a word in, Ruffnut crashed into them with a grin that easily stretched from one ear to the other.

"That's a great idea!" she exclaimed loudly, drawing the boys' attention to them.

"What's a great idea?" Tuffnut asked stupidly. Snotlout nodded his confusion.

"Going to visit Alani's island! Hiccup, you're a genius!" Ruffnut threw her arms open wide, "I mean think about it; we could visit her village, see the Sky Snakes for ourselves and swim in the ocean and go Pearl-diving or whatever it is she used to do!"

"That's actually not a bad idea," came a voice from behind them. The gang turned to see Alani holding out Hiccup's sketchbook to him.

"Are you sure? I mean I thought you were kicked out. 'Cause of what happened with your parents and everything?" Hiccup said as he thumbed through the sketchbook for the page Alani had drawn on. Alani nodded.

"That way, we can bring someone who can actually draw," she smiled sheepishly as Hiccup finally found the page. Alani was right. She was not a very good artist. The Sky Serpent she'd been drawing didn't look anything like a snake with wings. It looked more like a cross between a yak and a chicken. That had squiggly lines all around it.

"What's this stuff around it?" Hiccup asked nervously. He didn't want to hurt Alani's feelings about her drawing but he really had no idea what most of this was. Alani blushed and looked at her feet as everyone gathered around to look at her horrid drawing.

"T-that's supposed to be the lightning they use to attack," she squirmed uncomfortably.

Nope, Hiccup could not see that it looked anything like lightning. Sighing he closed the sketchbook and put on a kind smile.

"I'll talk to my dad about going to your island Alani. I'm pretty good at drawing so we won't need any extra passengers and-"

Hiccup was interrupted by several loud '_wohoo!_'s from everyone present, including Astrid. He could help but smile at their energy.

"But we'll only leave after Alani's all healed, alright?" he asked the group. They immediately calmed, nodding and muttering 'oh yeah's. Then Astrid piped up.

"Alright then! Let's head back to the village and let Chief Stoick know," she elbowed Hiccup playfully in the side, "Wouldn't want him worrying about where you've gone off to this time Hiccup."

The brunette smiled and started walking towards the village. Alani and Spitfire trailed after them slowly. Spitfire noticed the sad

smile on Alani's face and nudged her rider gently. Alani gave a start, pulled out from wherever her mind had wandered off to and pet the worried Night Fury with another sad smile.

"Looks like I'm going home sooner than I thought, huh girl?"

* * *

><p>So I've been thinking about naming my computer (husband), but I don't know what. Review or IM me with ideas, please and thank you! Side note: the crazier, the better!

7. Chapter 7

****If any of you feel like strangling me, mauling me, or setting me on fire; I can totally understand. Hell, I'll probably give you my address! I am so, so, so, so sorry I haven't updated in so freakin' long. I had exams up until yesterday and have also been suffering from a near-fatal case of Writer's Block. But if it makes it worth it, there's some major backstory filled with sweetness, wolves and so much "Aw!" in this chapter!****

****Honestly, this is the longest chapter I have ever written for any of my fan fics. Before this, I think my record was 5,000 words. In the beginning, the backstory was only going to be about Spitfire finding Alani. Nothing more. But then I just got whisked away in the world of my own making and it just kinda went from there.****

****Also on another note, Spitfire uses some terms that aren't exactly 'normal' so if you have any questions, let me know and I'll get back to you as soon as possible.****

****Disclaimer: I do NOT own HTTYD in any way, shape or form, no matter how much I wish it was so.****

****Enjoy!****

* * *

><p>~o000o~<p>

"So let me get this straight; you wanna goâ€¦to Alani's island homeâ€¦the one she was banished fromâ€¦to go dragon-watchin'?" Stoick eyed his son questionably. Hiccup shrugged slightly.

"Well, when you say it like that," Hiccup let the sentence die. Instead he watched the chief roll the idea over in his mind.

"And you know what? We'll come back with evidence of a brand-new dragon race we've never even seen before!" Hiccup encouraged. Stoick raised a bushy red brow in interest. Hiccup continued; "Think about it. None of us have ever seen a Sky Serpent before. Maybe because they can't stand the cold this far north, who knows! The village of Berk would sing and tell tales of you who discovered a new race of dragons!"

Stoick frowned slightly, "But you'd be the one who'd discovered them, Son, not I."

"I'm your son and the future chief of this village," Hiccup added, without missing a beat, "Anything I do is reflected upon you."

Stoick smiled and clapped a large hand on Hiccup's small shoulder. The boy's knees nearly buckled under the force but Hiccup managed to stay on his feet. He'd had plenty of years to get used to his father's 'affections' but it still surprised him at the vast difference between the two.

"Well if yeh wanna go that bad, you have my blessin's," the giant of a chief smiled down kindly at his only son. Hiccup watched his father's eyes trailed over him and onto something behind him, "You _and_ you're friends."

Hiccup turned and sure enough, Snotlout, Ruff and Tuff, Fishlegs and Astrid were peaking in through the open door or leaning precariously through the open window. With angry yells aimed at one another, the twins fell through the window's opening and landed on the floor with a crash. Hiccup chuckled, nodded at his father and left hand-in-hand with Astrid.

"So?" she asked slyly, as if she hadn't been eavesdropping on the majority of the previous conversation, "What'd the chief say?"

Hiccup grinned and shrugged nonchalantly, "Oh you know, boring things; catching enough food for the winter, making sure the dragons are properly taken care of, that we got the go-ahead on visiting Alani's island as long as we bring back lots of information and evidence on Sky Serpents."

The group cheered and high-fived each other and Snotlout and Tuffnut punched each other in the face before roaring happily at each other.

Astrid rolled her eyes. _Boys_.

"So when do we leave?" Fishlegs asked, bouncing in place as excited as the rest. Hiccup shrugged again.

"I don't know. After Alani's fully healed though. I'm gonna head down to the healer's and ask her."

The group of Viking teens headed down to the healer's in masse, talking loudly and excitedly about their future journey to the south. Snotlout and Tuffnut were discussing what the island girls would look like while Astrid and Ruffnut discussed which weapons they should bring in case they were attacked.

They finally reached the hut and Hiccup knocked on the door. No response. Astrid knocked again before entering quietly and disappearing into the healer's house. After a few short moments, Astrid exited the house as quietly as she'd entered, followed by the old woman.

"Alani's asleep." Astrid answered Hiccup's silent question.

"Yeh wish tah know 'bout the wee lass?" the old woman asked. Hiccup nodded and the woman smiled kindly, "She'll be fine. Her wounds are

healing nicely but I suggest not leavin' till she's fully healed. Soâ€¦about three weeks."

Some of the boys in their group sputtered and complained that three weeks would take forever, but Hiccup nodded, thanked the healer and left. If he were being honest with himself, even Hiccup thought three weeks were a long time. But it was in Alani's best interest to heal fully before the long journey to her home. After all, there was no one in their party that had any medical experience beyond a tourniquet and some herbs that when chewed to a pulp and applied to a wound, dulled the pain somewhat. No, that would not do. They would wait, however long it took, and take off with a happy and fully-healed Alani to lead the way.

So to pass the time and still allow Alani plenty of time to heal, the gang bombarded her with more questions about her home. Hiccup took this chance to learn more about the South's customs. He didn't want to accidentally insult someone while he was there because he was ignorant of their ways. Alani was currently covering greetings and basic manners.

"Well, how you greet someone depends on who the other person is. If you're close friends, you can greet them anyway you want; pinching, punching them softly in the shoulder, stuff like that," Alani stressed the word 'softly' to the boys. They nodded curtly and Alani began moving around them to help them practice the proper way to greet, "If you're meeting with someone older or more powerful than yourself, you place your right fist over your heart, yes like that. Now, bow your head slightly- no eye contact! Don't make eye contact with whoever you're greeting. That's considered a challenge." Alani leaned against Spitfire who was sitting and enjoying the sun while her rider taught the hatchlings. The black dragon watched as the black-haired hatchling with the curly-horned head-shield and gigantic nostrils bowed too low and Alani corrected it.

"Just from the head, like this."

Alani clasped a fist to her heart and bowed her head, keeping her eyes to the ground. The gang imitated her and she smiled.

"There you go! Now that's how you'll greet everyone, even those younger than you. And you'll always state your name first. It's only reasonable," she rolled her shoulder, feeling the stitches on her back tug slightly at her skin but not enough to pull them open. Tuffnut leaned on his sister and scoffed.

"Why's that so reasonable?"

The rest of the Vikings, except Hiccup and Fishlegs, murmured in agreement. They hadn't exactly been raised with any etiquette whatsoever, except to respect the Village Chief because he was the strongest among them. Alani shook her head.

"You're strangers from the north. How would you react if someone barged in on your village demanding your names?" Tuffnut lowered his head in understanding and continued practicing the greeting with his sister.

"Alright I think we got that down," Hiccup turned to Alani expectantly, "Anything else?"

Alani nodded, "When you meet Chief Abhay **(:Brave and Fearless)**, who you'll most definitely meet, you'll have to get down on your left knee with your fist over your heart, and announce yourself by name, a title if you have one, and your origins. This is a sign of utmost respect on the island of Nila Itsaso **(:sky blue & :Ocean)**. Here, I'll show you."

Alani went down on one knee, wincing slightly as the movement pulled at her stitches, placed her fist over her heart and bowed her head, "I am Alani of Nila Itsaso." The crimson haired girl rose from the ground, dusting the dirt from her knees. Catching the questioning look Hiccup, she shook her head, "I don't have any titles or anything fancy like that." She smiled and motioned for everyone to try. Hiccup went first. On his knee he placed a fist over his heart, bowed his head and spoke.

"I am Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the 3rd, future Chief of the Hairy Hooligan Tribe on the Isle of Berk in the North," he stated plainly, glancing up to the girl in front of him. She smiled and motioned for him to rise.

"Good. Hold your back a little straighter next time though, okay? Alright who's next?"

Astrid went next. As expected, she performed her formal greeting perfectly. Next came Snotlout and Fishlegs, followed by the bickering twins. Alani clapped her hands excitedly and congratulated them on a job well done.

"I think that's all you'll need to know for now. At least this way you'll make a good first impression on the villagers," Alani made her way with the group up to the Great Hall.

As they dug into the food the barmaid offered them, the topic somehow turned to what the Vikings were going to pack.

"I already have all my things packed," Astrid said before tearing into her roasted meat. She sat to Alani's right and passed her the plate of vegetables that was out of the red-head's reach.

"Mhmmhmm!" Snotlout mumbled in agreement, his mouth full of food. Alani giggled. He reminded her of the squirrels native to her island home.

"So Alani? I was wondering, what kind of stuff should we bring along?" Hiccup asked over the table. Ruffnut pushed her brother off the bench and sat down next to her.

"Well, the South is really warm so you won't need to bring extra clothes," Alani chewed thoughtfully on her broccoli sprinkled with goat-cheese. It was delicious. "You all have something to swim in right? And Hiccup, you'll need your sketchbook and a couple pencils; just in case."

"Alright! I _so_ cannot wait till we can go!" Snotlout roared happily, finally finished swallowing his huge mouth-full of food. Everyone yelled their agreements and tucked into their meals.

Three weeks crawled by slowly. Each and every morning, Hiccup would

find the twins up and awake and heading down to the healer's hut to check if Alani had miraculously cured overnight. Unfortunately, Alani joked, she was not blessed with super-human healing.

Every other day or so, the gang would make their way out into the cove and practice their greetings and other things they might need to know. For instance, women were considered equal to men - sometimes even higher - whether they could wield an axe or not. And if the current Chief only had daughters, instead of marrying them off to the strongest male warrior so that he may become the Chief, they were allowed to rule. Needless to say, Astrid and Ruffnut liked that; yes they liked that very much.

Another useful bit of information, were the table manners. On the village of Berk, during great feasts of celebration or those of mourning, the Chief always started. This was very much so on the island of Nila Itsaso. But Chief Abhay would start the each feast with a quick word, thanking Odin for the abundance of food. Occasionally he would add in the recent feat of one of the villagers - Alani's capability to reach the ocean floor had been one such feat and brought up at a feast " before settling in to chat and laugh with his people. The village would dine on meat of all kinds; mostly seafood but they would have deer, cow or goat on rare occasions. And yes, vegetables were a part of the menu. Snotlout and Tuffnut cringed and made gagging and retching noises before Astrid and Ruffnut did the honor of shutting the boys up. While Hiccup was very happy Astrid was his girlfriend and everything, seeing Snotlout limping away to the healer's, sporting a black eye and a bloody lip made him strengthen his resolve to never get on the Viking woman's bad side. She was terrifying.

Two weeks till Alani was deemed fit for flight. The young Viking Heroes were growing antsy. Astrid had taking Hiccup out into the woods to practice her axe-work to vent some of her excitement. Hiccup could still barely lift the heavy weapon so he stuck to watching her slaughter invisible enemies and chopping dead trees to splinters on a nearby rock. The twins had gone back to their usual pastimes; knocking over sheep in the fields, setting fire to Gobber's pants with the help of Barf and Belch, and lazing about the Dragon Training Arena. Snotlout was either working out and showing off his prowess or constantly visiting Alani in the healer's hut. Fishlegs had taken to talking to his Gronkle, cleaning her paws and reading her bedtime stories about faraway dragon knights who saved beautiful dragon princesses being held captive by evil demons.

Stoic had noticed the restless Viking teens and gave each of them jobs that would 'cure' them of their restlessness. The twins were sent to plow the fields, Astrid helped Hiccup out in the forge and Snotlout was forced to help patch up the holes in the roof of each house in the village. Fishlegs was sent to accompany Alani as the poor girl was growing bored out of her mind, lying around and doing nothing due to her injuries. For the next week, all the Viking teens, with the obvious exception of Alani and Fishlegs, went to sleep exhausted every night. No more restless wandering around. Problem solved.

One week till the long-awaited departure. Alani's scars were healing nicely and she was allowed to do more and more everyday. A few days ago, she'd managed all the way to the cove without wincing much, leaning on someone or being carried altogether. After forcing the

boys to turn around to preserve the 'maidenly innocence', Astrid and Ruffnut pulled up Alani's shirt to take a look at the scars. The resounding gasp from the two caused the boys to turn around in curiosity. Alani's green shirt was pulled up almost over her head, revealing most of her bare white torso. The scar across Alani's soft middle region was tender to the touch and shiny pink skin was sealing the wounds shut; a sign of good healing. As for the wounds on her back, the three long gashes were taking longer to heal but were doing just as well as her mid-section; another couple days and she could get her stitches taken out. Alani's face had been as red as her hair for hours afterward and she refused to look any of the boys in their faces for the rest of the day.

Six days. Alani went to the healer and got her stitches taken out. Alani hissed slightly as the last thread of her stomach injury was finally pulled out and the healer turned to continued working on her back. Whilst pulling out the treads that had kept Alani from bleeding out, some of the thread's fibers caught her skin and pulled. The healer quickly pulled out a salve and administered it all over Alani's back to stop the blood that oozed out. After bandaging her torso and back, Alani was allowed back outside and into the (careful) embrace of the Viking teens that were waiting for her. They took her to the cove where everyone had prepared a picnic in celebration of Alani's removal of her stitches. They stayed there the rest of the day, playing in the shallow end of the pond and hanging out. Alani was appointed referee, as to not upset her still-healing wounds, as the boys raced each other around the cove. Astrid presented the red-head with a small dagger she'd made in the forge with Hiccup's help. Astrid had forged the blade while Hiccup had made the handle and a sheath with a small dragon on the side. It was beautiful. Everyone laughed and ruffled her hair as tears welled up in Alani's eyes and the red-haired girl thanked Astrid over and over again. The rest of the day, Ruffnut braided blue flowers (Tuffnut had gone to pick them) into Alani's crimson hair as Astrid showed the girl a trick to sharpening a dagger. The boys sat around talking about girls, dragons and punching each other till the sun dipped over the horizon, staining the sky with splashes of oranges, pinks and reds. As they walked back to the village, Hiccup glanced at Alani who was admiring the dagger and showing it to a curious Spitfire. Maybe it was the way the light hit her, or maybe he was just seeing things but Hiccup could've sworn he saw her eyes flash gold as she looked over at him. Alani blinked and sky-blue eyes danced back at him.

Four days. The restlessness from last week was back. Astrid unpacked all her things, only to stare at the contents and pack them back up again. This continued several times over before the blonde Viking took to the forest to dance with her blade. Ruffnut badgered her brother which swim suit she should take. The male twin shot a sarcastic remark and was rewarded with a punch in the face which lead to the two fighting all the way down the stairs of their home to the main plaza in the middle of the village. Snotlout mumbled nervous things under his breath, counting on his fat little fingers and rushing from the Dragon Training Arena to see Hookfang to his house where loud banging and rummaging was heard. Fishlegs skirted around nervously. He'd never been far from home before. The island that held the Dragon's Nest before they'd defeated the Queen was the farthest he'd gone from the Isle of Berk in his life and honestly it wasn't really that far. The South, however, was farther away; by a lot. The island of Nila Itsaso wasn't on any of the maps Berk had so everyone just assumed it was too far south. The thought made the larger-set

boy jump around nervously with butterflies in his stomach.

The only one not seemingly affected by the up-and-coming flight to the South, was Hiccup. Sure he was a bit nervous but nothing on the same level as Snotlout or Fishlegs. What if the Sky Serpents attacked while they were flying towards the island? What if they grew tired along the way and crashed into the cruel ocean below? What if, what if, what if. Hiccup's mind was full of them. But he'd put his nervousness to good use. At least that's what he thought. The last few days, Hiccup had situated him in the forge, remaking his old saddle more long-term friendly. He and Gobber had been working on new designs that would be comfortable and strong yet reliable. If Alani's recollection of her travels were anything to go by, then they were in for a very long flight. A very long flight he'd rather had a comfortable saddle to sit on. He'd also taken the liberty of remaking everyone else's saddles as well.

Three days. With the help of the healing salves the healer insisted upon smearing across Alani's closed wounds, the horrible scars that had threatened her life a few weeks prior were now fading into a pale pink. They were still shiny and would probably remain that way for the rest of the girl's life but hey; it was something to tell the grandkids one day.

One day. The Viking teens were running around like chickens with their heads cut off, yelling at parents for misplaced items as they un-packed and re-packed their bags again. They scurried around the village; frantically going over what it was they'd need, sharpening weapons to the point where they dulled again and getting on everyone's nerves altogether. Alani had taken it upon herself to mediate the packing so that everyone would keep their heads and had gathered them in the Great Hall.

"One set of cold weather clothes?" the crimson-haired girl walked down the line of Viking teens much like a general in front of her troops. The group laid out the named items.

"Yup!"

"Check."

"Got it!"

"We got ours!"

"Right here."

Alani checked over the items and deemed them good enough. Leave it to the villagers of Berk to make warm clothes considering it snowed and rained there most of the year.

"Alright. You'll need one set of cold weather clothes and one pair of boots, preferably waterproof. One set of warm weather clothes with maybe a pair of sandals or something," Alani inspected each teen's items, "Ruffnut, you'll only need one bathing suit."

Ruffnut muttered curses as she was told to unpack god knows how many bathing suits she'd stuffed into her bag.

"Alright, one primary weapon and one secondary?"

Astrid grinned as she laid out her favorite axe. Snotlout had grabbed a short sword and was waving it around as if it were nothing. Ruffnut got an axe while her brother got a mace. Fishlegs held a small axe to himself as if he didn't know what to do with it now that he had it. Everyone's choice of a secondary weapon was a simple dagger. Enormously useful, daggers could be used for cooking, whittling and hunting. Since Hiccup couldn't carry more than a dagger, he pocketed two. Alani herself had carefully strapped the dagger made for her around her waist. Smiling, she allowed her 'soldiers' to pack their things and stepped up towards Hiccup.

"Since you'll be the one drawing the Sky Serpents, you might wanna pack extra pencils and paper," she smiled and turned to pack her own things. She'd borrowed some clothes and a bag from Astrid and Ruffnut. Hiccup rubbed his aching shoulder before slouching down on the bench at her table.

"You exited about going home?"

Alani giggled but stilled her movements, "Hiccup, you've asked me that for the last couple of weeks! Of course I'm exited!" Despite her words, Hiccup saw the way her smile didn't quite reach her eyes and worry danced in her eyes. She'd stiffen every time he'd asked that question over the last week but the girl would always try to laugh it off as nothing. Hiccup sighed. If there was something Alani didn't want to tell him, he wouldn't push.

"Well it's getting pretty late and we'll need our strength tomorrow," Alani yawned before letting out a yelp in surprise as Spitfire appeared behind her and scooped the girl onto her back. The dragoness bounded off to the healer's hut for the night. Spitfire had been hanging out with Toothless a lot while Alani hung out with the Vikings. The two Night Furies had gotten pretty close and Spitfire even allowed Toothless to nap within wing-distance of her without chasing the poor male away with a singed tail. Toothless and the rest of the dragons were as exited as their riders at the thought of traveling to another island. They'd been between the Dragon's Nest and the Isle of Berk plenty of times but none had gone farther than that. The Queen Dragon hadn't allowed them to stray too far, out of fear that they'd fly beyond her control. Spitfire however, wasn't on the same page as the rest of the dragons. She knew going back to that place worried Alani and thus it worried her. It seemed like forever ago since the dragoness had found the little crimson-haired girl wandering around in the forest said to be home to a ferocious beast. Little did the villagers know, Spitfire was the 'ferocious beast' that kept the humans off her hunting ground.

Spitfire was bounding through the trees after a young deer. The unfortunate animal had crossed the dragon's path and the hungry Night Fury hadn't wasted a second in pursuing it. After eating her fill, Spitfire blasted the carcass with a ball of purple fire. She wasn't going to leave any remains for those blasted Sky Serpents, let alone lead them to her hunting grounds. She didn't know what was with 'Odin's blessed Messengers', as the villagers had taken to calling them but they just didn't feel like dragons. As Spitfire made her way through the underbrush towards the cavern she'd taken to calling home, some rustling to her right caught her attention. Immediately, the large black predator pounced silently to the left; into the shadows cast by the surrounding trees, electric blue eyes trained on

the direction of the sound. The rustling grew louder before a small red thing fell out into the path Spitfire had been on just moments previous. Spitfire almost huffed in disappointment; with the level of noise the thing had created coming through the underbrush, she'd been expecting something bigger, more threatening. But without so much as a warning or any indication of _why_, the little thing curled into a ball where it had fallen and wailed. The sound the thing made Spitfire grind her fangs in pain; it felt like a dragon had burned her ears and was chewing them off! _

_With a loud growl, Spitfire jumped over the bushes concealing her, mind set on ending the noise-maker's life. All that wailing would scare the food away. Obviously the little noise-maker heard the dragon's paws hit the ground; Spitfire wasn't making an attempt at keeping silent, and the red thing looked up at her approaching bringer-of-death, teary sky-blue eyes glued to electric blue. Spitfire stopped in mid-step, paw hanging awkwardly in the air. The little red thing that screamed like a dying dragon, was human! There was a human hatchling in her forest! Spitfire wasted no time in turning tail and disappearing through the thick underbrush. _

_This was bad; this was very, very bad! Hatchlings weren't ever far from their parents and angry parents were not something Spitfire ever wanted to deal with. And what were the humans doing in her forest anyway? The dragoness had spent years taking advantage of the humans' ridiculous superstitions and 'haunting' the forest, keeping them from entering for fear of a painful death. So why was there a human Hatchling in her domain? _

_Despite what humans thought about dragons, they were very intelligent and Night Furies were amongst the smartest. Spitfire couldn't kill the hatchling; the villagers would form a search party for the missing hatchling, combing through the woods and scaring away all the prey. That, and it went against her instincts as a dragon. No dragon in his right mind would mindlessly kill a hatchling, no matter the race. Hatchlings were weak and had no chance to defend themselves. Being a Fledgling-Killer or a Nest-Thief would mean certain death by order of Dragon Law. Only Rogues, dragons who'd gone mad, would ever commit such a heinous crime against nature. And Spitfire was no Rogue. _

_Spitfire slowed her pace when she figured she'd run far enough. The dragon wanted to laugh at herself for worrying so much. The Hatchling's parents would take the little one home to the village and Spitfire wouldn't have to deal with them. Of course, she'd have to scare the villagers a bit to make them stay out of her forest just to be safe. If the villagers knew a dragon lived in their forest, they'd most likely hunt her down or chase her out. That was something Spitfire didn't want; the game here was wonderful and there were countless trees, brooks and hidden caves all over the forest. It was perfect for a lone dragoness such as herself. _

_Over the next couple days, Spitfire's assumption was sent up in flames. The Hatchling's parents never came to take the little one back to the village. In fact, no one, not a single soul, came to the forest to fetch the little thing. Spitfire would watch it warily from the shadows. The dragoness never showed herself, opting instead to crouch in the shadows, hoping that the youngling would just return to village herself. She'd determined the Hatchling's gender the second day of watching when she'd spied the little one squatting to relieve

herself of her fluids. The girl would eat the berries that grew within reach and slept on the ground under some bushes at night. The damned youngling would snuffle and cry herself to sleep every night. Sometimes she'd scream out in her sleep, waking the dragoness in the middle of the night and the predator debated the merits of silencing the human for good. In the end, she did nothing._

Even though Spitfire didn't want to attract unwanted attention to herself and had stopped hunting because of the human girl, her stomach was waging war on her mind and soon enough, it won. Spitfire stalked up on the girl, making sure the little one was busying herself with finding more berries before darting off to the other end of the forest. In less than an hour, the dragoness had felled a young stag that had been prancing too close. Just as she was finishing off the remains, Spitfire caught movement out of the corner of her eyes and turned to face the threat. The young girl, who'd been hiding behind some bushes, gasped and cowered behind a tree. Spitfire's eyes turned to slits and she growled low in her throat, stepping away from her kill and disappeared into the darkness of the woods.

For next few days, the girl seemed to follow Spitfire through the forest, though at a large distance. Whenever the dragon would make a kill and eat her fill, Spitfire would leave, only to spy the human rummaging through it for scraps not long after. The girl would be quick about it too; peering around carefully from her hiding place behind a tree, darting out to the remains of the poor animal and cram as much of the charred meat into her mouth as she could before fleeing to the safety of the trees again.

Spitfire didn't understand. Didn't the Hatchling have enough to sustain herself without having to tail a dangerous predator that just as easily turn around and turn her into a meal? Now that she looked around the Hatchling's poor choice of nesting ground, Spitfire couldn't see a berry in sight. All the bushes that were once teeming with juicy red berries were bare; not a single morsel in sight. Spitfire huffed incredulously. No wonder the youngling had taken to following her!

It had been about seven Suns since the Hatchling had first come to Spitfire's forest before the dragoness saw what the human youngling was truly capable of.

_Spitfire had been napping in the sun, stretching out her large black wings and enjoying the warm rays on her body, when she heard a shrill scream. The black dragon recognized that scream; who knows how many times she'd been awoken by that very scream in the dead of night. Taking to the sky, Spitfire flew in the direction she heard the scream. Landing on a sturdy branch in a tall elm, she spotted the red Hatchling running through the trees as fast as her legs could carry her. A lone wolf was on her tail, growling and snapping at her heels.

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_The girl was terrified, that much was certain; her eyes were wide with fright and her mouth was open in a silent scream yet no sound came out as all her energy was directed towards staying alive. The girl scrambled over a fallen log, ducking out of the way just as the wolf's gaping maws closed on thin air, just barely missing the soft flesh of the Hatchling's arm. She darted around several trees before running out into a large open field. Spitfire internally scoffed at the human Hatchling's poor choice of escape. The girl was as good as

dead now. Open fields were a predator's best friend; there was nothing the prey could hide behind, nothing to climb up into, nothing to duck under. As surprisingly fast as this little one was, there was no way she'd make it to the safety of other side of the field before the wolf caught her. Yup, there she goes._

_With a snarl, the wolf took a running leap right onto the girl's back, knocking her to the ground. The girl cried out in pain as she scrambled to her knees in the grass facing her soon-to-be killer. The wolf prowled in a wide circle around the girl, growling menacingly at her and snapping at her occasionally, leaving her to whimper like the pathetic little weakling she was. Spitfire rolled her eyes from her perch amongst the elm's branches, tail twitching this way and that in irritation. Cocky predators; as if terrifying their food wasn't enough during the chase, they had to taunt and tease their prey at the end. While Spitfire loved a good hunt and the thrill of the chase excited her like nothing else, she always made quick work of her quarry. To her, there was no point in drawing it out. The poor beasts she hunted deserved at least that much for even attempting to outrun her. _

The wolf stopped circling the little one like a vulture; Spitfire knew that this was it, the girl would die. The girl sat crouched in the grass, as if she were frozen to the ground, blue eyes glued to the yellow-black of the wolf's. The Hatchling's hands clawed at something on the ground.

_It all happened in only a few seconds. The wolf pounced. The girl screamed and brought up her hands. _

_Figuring the show was over, Spitfire turned and was just about to fly back to her cave when a loud yelp pierced the silence. Whirling back around, the dragon's whole body slumped against her branch in disbelief as her electric-blue eyes widened as far as they could go. The wolf lay drooping over the girl, twitching and whining. The girl threw the wolf's body off herself, struggled to stand but fell backwards and scrambling away from it as fast as she could. She was covered in blood, but none of it was her own. The wolf tried howling in pain but only managed a wet gurgle as its life blood seeped into the ground through a deep gash in its neck. The girl stared in horror at the blood that almost covered her from head to toe and she was making weird strangled noises. It reminded Spitfire of a rat she'd caught in her cave once; she'd 'played' with it until she'd gotten bored and killed it. Crawling slowly towards the dying wolf's body; the weak, helpless, fragile little human Hatchling did something Spitfire never saw coming. _

She cried.

The little one fell to her knees an arm's length away from the dying wolf, and cried. She cried so hard, Spitfire could see the spasms that racked her body. The youngling looked at something clutched in her hand before giving out an almighty cry, throwing the object away from her with everything she had. The offending object hit the base of Spitfire's tree and she narrowed her eyes to see what it was from her perch.

_It was a rock; sharp-edged and covered in blood, it was about the size of one of her talons. So that's what she'd clawed out of the ground before the wolf attacked! She'd used a rock to fend off a

wolf! If Spitfire were her Dam, she'd be very proud of the little one. But the little one was not her own and Spitfire eyed the girl in the field in confusion. _

She'd won. She'd survived. So why was the Hatchling acting like this? Was it her first kill? She should be proud and taking the wolf's body home to present to her Sire and her Dam, not wallowing in despair like a weakling. Why was she acting so pathetically frail over the predator, that had just a few moments ago, tried to kill her?

As Spitfire continued trying to make sense of the youngling's strange behavior, the Hatchling continued to cry over the wolf. When the poor beast's body stopped moving, she scooted closer to it and petted down its bloody fur, sobbing the whole time. She remained where she was, crying and covered in blood, long after the corpse had cooled. The sun had dipped just below the horizon before the Hatchling finally picked herself up from the ground and staggered back into the woods that lead to her sad excuse of a nest. Spitfire flew ahead of her, landing a safe distance away from the clearing that the Hatchling would undoubtedly enter in a little while. Sneaking forward using the shadows as cover, the dragoness waited for the human Hatchling.

_Spitfire didn't even know why she bothered coming here. But dragons were curious creatures by nature and right now, Spitfire cursed that part of herself. Humans were dangerous and killed anything they deemed a threat or anywhere below them. They destroyed forests to make homes for their growing numbers, not caring about the hundreds of defenseless animals whose homes were ruined in the process. They were all this and more, and yet, this girl, this _human_ Hatchling, cried over the death of a moon-brother, a wolf and her would-be killer. Spitfire knew what humans thought of wolves; she'd seen countless skins hung up for decoration or worn by the leaders of their flock. What she didn't understand was why the girl would cry for the enemy like that. It just didn't make any sense._

_A rustling in the bushes alerted Spitfire to the girl's arrival. She stumbled over something in the near-dark and didn't bother catching herself. The Hatchling crashed into the ground, barely uttering a sound. She crawled forward, slowly, wearily, towards her nest under some bushes. Spitfire didn't move for a while even as the girl's whimpers and sobbing quieted and she fell asleep. When she was sure the youngling was asleep, the dragoness snuck forward, one tentative paw at a time until she loomed over the little one curled up on a bed of leaves. She sniffed the girl and almost sneezed. Great blazing fires, the child smelled! The over-powering scent of the wolf's blood as well as seven Suns' worth of filth was almost too much for poor Spitfire's nose. _

_The dragoness just about reared back just to shake the stink from her nose when a loud grumbling broke the silence. The Hatchling's face scrunched up in pain and for a moment Spitfire thought she would wake. But the child just turned over on her side and continued sleeping. The grumbling sound was heard again and this time Spitfire searched it out. It came from the sleeping Hatchling. The dragon's eyes softened into round orbs as she observed the sleeping youngling. She was hungry. Thinking back, Spitfire tried to remember when the last time she'd seen the girl scavenge through her left-overs for something to eat. The berries had been out of the question for

several days now; there were none around last time she'd looked. And it had been several days since Spitfire had last watched the girl eat from the remains of her meals._

_Spitfire sat back on her hind legs and observed the sleeping child. The silence of the night was broken only by the chirping of the nightly insects, the wind stirring through the trees, the girl's soft snores and the occasional grumbling of her stomach. The dragoness nodded to herself, seemingly confirming whatever course of action she'd decided on, before turning and disappearing into the woods.

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_The next morning, Spitfire found the Hatchling up and wandering about aimlessly. The girl's feet took her down numerous paths, only to end up back at her nest. The Fire-In-The-Sky had traveled half-way across the blue expanse of cloudless sky before the child finally gave up whatever she was doing and curled under her bush, crying softly. Spitfire took this opportunity and took off to where she'd last spotted a herd of deer grazing. Picking out a small one, a young buck just barely sprouting his horns, Spitfire pounced, tackling the poor creature to the ground and ran her claws down its throat. The results were instantaneous. The young buck hadn't even managed to scream a warning to the rest of the herd before its spirit left its body to join his ancestors. The rest of the herd had however, heard the buck's body hitting the ground and screamed in fear at the black huntress, bounding away as fast as they could. Spitfire paid them no mind as she set to work. Tearing open the buck's belly, she gathered a small ball of fire at the back of her throat. It took several shots of her deadly purple fire before the meat turned black; not charcoal, just black. Happy with her work, Spitfire slipped into to a clearing near the Hatchling's nest, carrying the dead buck along. The dragon dumped the meat on the ground and snuck to where the Hatchling nested. _

Sure enough, the smell of charred meat woke the youngling from her fitful rest. The girl's stomach grumbled loudly, demanding sustenance. She glanced around her before crawling out from under her bush and onto her feet. Spitfire watched warily from her hiding place in the shadows as the Hatchling stepped closer and closer towards the other clearing where the food awaited. It didn't take the child long to spot the food, for as soon as she did, the little one threw herself at it, tearing into it hungrily. Spitfire almost pitied the girl but she was too busy congratulating herself on a good job. It had been the first time she'd 'cooked' anything and was very proud that the human was enjoying the meal. On several occasions where the dragon had flown over the humans' village, she'd seen them lay slabs of meat over fires before eating it. And she'd never seen them eat it raw.

The Hatchling exclaimed something out loud drew Spitfire out of her self-appointed congratulations. The girl was looking skyward, tears streaming down her pale face with a smile brighter than the Fire-In-The-Sky. Spitfire stared. What was with this Hatchling and crying? But judging by the smile on the girl's face, they weren't the same kind of tears she'd shed over the wolf. Spitfire's eyes softened before turning away and returning to her cave, leaving the girl to her first meal in days.

_Weeks passed by. Ever since that day, whenever Spitfire went hunting, she'd leave more and more left-overs for the girl to eat.

She'd always cook it before leaving it, but only after she'd eaten her fill of raw meat. Something about the cooked meat, the texture or maybe the way it went down, didn't feel the same to the dragon so she left the cooked meat to the Hatchling. The girl would watch her from behind a tree, probably thinking the dragon couldn't see her, and wait till after the dragon left before darting out to eat whatever was left over. One time, the girl stepped out from behind the tree into plain sight. As soon as Spitfire laid her eyes on the girl, the little one yelped and disappear behind her tree again._

_Over time though, the Hatchlings grew bolder. _

The first couple days, she'd announce her presence by snapping a twig "as if Spitfire didn't know she was there in the first place - and acknowledge the dragon's gaze before plopping down on the ground several trees away.

_Then she'd sit one tree closer, just watching the dragon eat her fill before charring the meat and walking away. _

Another tree closer, and then another. This continued until the girl sat barely a wing-span away. Spitfire could have reached out with her tail and brushed up against the Hatchling's leg if she wanted to.

Eventually Spitfire didn't bother walking away from the kill like she usually did. Lying down just beside the kill, Spitfire curled her tail around herself and shut her eyes. If the girl wanted to eat, she'd have to eat beside the dragon. The dragoness half-expected the girl to sneak up, snatch the meat and run away as fast as she could. The other half, the half Spitfire didn't fully understand, hoped that the little one trusted her enough to sit beside her and eat her fill.

What she didn't expect was the sudden, warm hand on the edge of her wing, the wing closest to the meal that awaited the youngling. Spitfire tensed but didn't move. She was curious as to what would make the Hatchling touch her.

The Hatchling didn't move her hand from the dragon's wing. Instead, she moved her hand along the edge of the wing slightly before bringing up her hand and doing the same motion again. The girl was petting the dragoness, saying something in her human tongue. The soft petting, the gentle voice; they could only add up to one thing in Spitfire's mind.

_ 'Thank you.' _

* * *

><p>Aaaw! So much sweetness! Let me know what you think and again, I am so, so , so sorry for not updating earlier. I'll work on that next time.

8. Chapter 8

Hello everyone!

**First of all, please don't kill me. I know it has been a very,

very, very long time since I updated but believe me, I wish I could have done so earlier. But my Well of Writing Ideas has run dry and can't seem to come up with anything good let alone halfway decent. Anywho, I finally have another chapter up so hopefully that will appease my avid readers. Hopefully you all know I love you and won't try to hunt me down to hurt me.**

On another note, I will just be saying that while my Well of Writing Ideas is empty and no good, I will not be updating as often. Granted I didn't do much of that before but this time I will be giving everyone a heads up instead of just disappearing off the face of the earth.

**Disclaimer: I do not own HTTYD in any way, shape or form. I wish I did though. **

Enjoy!

* * *

><p>~o000o~<p>

It was the day of departure. As expected, Hiccup didn't get as much sleep as he should have. He'd been up most of the night, too giddy to fall asleep. He wasn't the only one either. Astrid, Fishlegs, the twins and Snotlout all had noticeable bags under their eyes but they were still smiling excitedly. Their dragons were also excited, but not enough to make them loose sleep over it. They had assembled in the town square waiting for Alani to come from the healer's hut. The girl had been staying there just in case something happened with her wounds.

Instead of coming from the direction of the healer's home, Alani came bounding out of the forest on Spitfire's back. The girl slid gracefully off the black dragoness as they came to a stop smiling at the Viking teens. She had borrowed a traveling cloak from Astrid but it was about two sizes too big for her tiny form so the sleeves hung well over her hands and it ended at her calf. The outfit she'd worn when she'd first come to the island of Berk had long since been destroyed by the crash landing but her vest had been salvageable. She had traded the clothes from the healer for some of Ruffnut's; a rough long-sleeved belted tunic with her vest and a skirt complete with legs wraps. She looked like a true villager of Berk.

"You guys ready to go?" the crimson-haired girl asked, grabbing her bag from the pile where everyone had just thrown their stuff. Everyone nodded, grabbing their respective bags, talking excitedly amongst each other. Families came to say goodbye to their children as the Viking teens strapped their provisions to the awaiting dragons.

Hiccup watched his father come through the parting crowd.

"Hiccup," he stated plainly, "Going off on another great dragon adventure! If I weren't the Village Chief, I'd go with yeh! But I won't be there to watch your back, soâ€¦" Stoic trailed off awkwardly before pulling Hiccup into a bone-crushing hug, "You be careful out there, alright?"

Hiccup smiled into his father's embrace and wrapped his tiny arms

around his father's wide girth. Of course the big man would be worried. Last time he'd gone off on a 'great dragon adventure' as Stoic had said, Hiccup had almost died. Sure he'd lost a foot but he'd managed to survive. All thanks to his dragon companion, Toothless. Said dragon nudged Hiccup none too gently, urging the young man to get a move on. Hiccup chuckled lightly, shoving the larger black dragon aside.

"Alright, alright! I get it," Hiccup directed at Toothless before turning back to his father, "I'll be alright, Dad. I've got the 'Great Viking Heroes' and Toothless with me. What's the worst that could happen?" The brunette grinned confidently. But Stoic was not swayed by the gesture.

"Yo Stoic! If yeh keep worrin' 'bout the boy like that, if won't be long before yer bead will turn white!" Gobber limped up and placed a meaty hand on the Chief's shoulder. The large smith turned to Hiccup and gestured to the group of teens waiting for him in the town center.

Ruff and Tuff were playfully bickering with each other on their dragon, Fishlegs was on his Gronkle muttering things nervously under his breath, Snotlout was mounting his Monstrous Nightmare and Alani was handing one last bag of supplies up to Astrid perched on her Deadly Nadder. Alani turned to walk back to her dragon when their eyes met. Sky blue eyes met with forest green. Alani blinked, breaking eye-contact first to grin sheepishly and mount Spitfire.

"Yeh best git goin' if yeh wanna get out before nightfall," Gobber's voice broke through Hiccup's thoughts. The brunette nodded and made his way over to Toothless who'd gone to keep Spitfire company whilst his rider finished up with his goodbyes.

"Alright, everyone ready?" Hiccup called one last time before taking off in the direction of the sun rise.

As they flew farther and farther from his home, the one place he'd grown up in, Hiccup felt a pang in his stomach. Over the roaring winds tearing past his ears, he could hear the roars of the people and dragons left behind wishing them a safe journey. The shouts and roars soon faded until all the Viking teens could hear was the steady pounding of wings, the ocean lapping peacefully far below them and the whistling of the wind.

Hiccup maneuvered Toothless over to where Spitfire and Alani were gliding easily through the air.

"Alright Alani!" he called over the wind, "I don't really know how to get to Nila Itsaso, so how about you take the lead?"

Alani nodded and with a few extra beats of Spitfire's large wings, quickly pulled ahead of the group. Hiccup and Astrid flew behind her as Snotlout, Fishlegs and the twins brought up the rear.

They flew steadily towards the south, talking amongst themselves to pass the time. The twins had already gotten into several fights before Astrid threatened to throw them both into the raging blue below them. The day continued to pass by; early morning golds and pinks fading into various shades of blue with the occasional white

cloud. As the sun reached its peak in the sky signaling High Noon, the teens dug into their food, throwing the dragons fish every once in a while. Snotlout nearly fell to his death when Hookfang had missed the thrown fish and had dived after the tasty morsel. A few minutes of screaming panic and severe scolding later, and Snotlout would forever deny that he 'screamed like a little girl', as the twins so lovingly pointed out.

The sun continued its path across the sky and soon the heavens were stained with vibrant reds and golds. Night was falling and Hiccup had yet to see even a hint of land anywhere in sight.

"Alani! Is there anywhere we can land? The dragons are getting tired!" Hiccup called over the winds so that the red-haired girl could hear him. He probably didn't need to mention the part about the dragons being tired since they'd visibly been slowing down as the sun dipped below the horizon. They were relying more and more the warm updrafts to keep them airborne but now that night had fallen, there were next to no warm winds to help them along.

"If they can last a bit longer, there's a small island just a little farther ahead!" Alani yelled back and aimed Spitfire down closer to the water. The rest of the Viking teens followed and soon they were all skimming above the choppy waves of the water below.

When the sun finally disappeared below the horizon, the full moon had settled itself in his throne in the sky, bathing the Vikings and their dragons in his eerie white light.

"Oh no," Alani muttered before lying in close to Hiccup, "This is bad! We have to find the island soon or else-"

"What's that?" Tuffnut exclaimed pointing to the ocean below. A light blur was zooming below the surface directly under them. The blur grew clearer and clearer as the thing came closer to the surface and it seemed to be glowing slightly.

"Everyone! Up!" Alani ordered and Spitfire roared. The group's dragons began beating at the air not a moment too soon as a head parted the waters. The Scauldron gurgled out a roar, shooting a deadly boiling spray at its would-be victims. Toothless roared and Hiccup maneuvered them into a firing position. The black dragon shot a small ball of purple fire at the Scauldron. The giant water dragon roared, ducking underwater and Toothless' fireball hissed and died as it made contact with the water throwing up a small cloud of steam. That gave Hiccup an idea.

"Everyone! Shoot at the water!"

The other Vikings didn't need to be told twice as each dragon let out a single shot. Soon the entire area was covered with steam thick enough to hide in.

"Alright everyone! Fly above the cloud!" Hiccup yelled as he and Toothless made their way towards fresh air. He heard everyone yell their affirmatives. When Toothless and Hiccup broke through the warm steam, they found Alani and Spitfire waiting for them in the clear.

"What was that all about?" Astrid called from somewhere behind

Hiccup.

"Yeah; aren't Scauldrons supposed to be more or less peaceful?" Hiccup asked a flustered Fishlegs. The large boy looked down at the ocean below, wringing his hands and chewing on his lip. His dragon Meatlug hovered above the rest of the dragons, seemingly determined to keep her beloved rider as far from the danger as possible.

"Y-yeah they are, but what could have made it so aggressive?"

"It's the moon," Alani steered Spitfire closer to the group as they stared in awe and fear down at the angrily roaring Scauldron below in the sea, "Here in the South it's what we call a Hunter's Moon. It agitates the dragons and heightens their levels of aggression. I think we'll be fine so long as we steer clear of the water until we reach land."

The Scauldron roared again as its prey flew away towards the nearest island.

"There it is!" Ruffnut shouted happily as the tiny silhouette of the island they would rest on appeared in the distance.

"Just a little longer bud," Hiccup reassured Toothless and the dragon shook his head tiredly and continued flying.

The dragons crashed onto the small stretch of beach the lined the northern side of the island and the twins immediately jumped off their dragon and began kissing the ground. It was only after their mouths were full of sand that they stopped and rushed to the water to rinse it out.

"Yech, that tastes terrible!" Tuffnut grumbled as he finally washed out the last of the grit from his mouth.

"God I never want to ride a dragon again!" Ruffnut yelled as she rubbed her sore bottom. None of the Viking where used to flying for such a long distance and though the saddles were comfortable, sitting in the same position for hours at a time really took a toll on everyone. The dragons slumped gratefully in the sand, happy to have time to rest their sore and aching wings.

"Hey where are we anyway?" Astrid asked as she unstrapped her packs from Stormfly's saddle. Hiccup shrugged and did the same for Toothless. The black dragon gurgled happily as the extra load was taking from his back.

"I dunno. Alani's the one you should be asking-hey! Where's Alani?" Hiccup asked. The teens looked around but there was no sign of Alani or Spitfire anywhere.

"Alani! Spitfire!" Hiccup called as loud as he could. Toothless roared. The island was small, barely a mile long and a mile wide so the girl couldn't have gone far. If she was still on the island, she would be able to hear the Vikings calling for her.

"Hey, you don't have to yell," Alani pushed a small bush to the side as she strode out of a forest only a few dozen trees strong with Spitfire on her tail, "I just scouted ahead. There don't seem to be

predators near here so we should be safe for the rest of the night. I found a good place to camp though; follow me."

Alani motioned to the group and they followed her to a small clearing almost in the middle of the woods. The rest of the gang unloaded their dragons as Astrid and Hiccup searched for firewood. Ten minutes later they had a warm fire going and everyone was slowly nodding off. Snotlout had already fallen asleep leaning against Hookfang and the dragon curled up around his rider. The twins, Barf and Belch purred irritably at each other but too tired to really get into it. Fishlegs was whispering a goodnight story to Meatlug and soon the only ones awake were Alani, Astrid and Hiccup. Stormfly was asleep and purring contentedly beside her rider and Toothless was nodding off. Spitfire however remained alert, electric blue eyes vigilantly trained on the southern part of the forest. If there were any predators bigger than the mosquito, they would not be getting past her. Alive, that is.

They sat around the fire, watching it lick and eat away at the wood, casting sharp shadows around the clearing. Alani looked up at the full moon smiling down on them from the inky black of the sky. She sighed heavily.

"If they're still following the old traditions, my village will be celebrating the Hunter's Moon tonight with a hunt," she murmured, eyes still trained on the floating white orb in the sky.

"So about this Hunter's Moon—what is that exactly? Your explanation earlier didn't really clear that up," Hiccup asked, looking over the fire at the crimson-haired girl. She sighed again and tore her gaze from the moon to stare into the warmth of the fire.

"Here in the South, a Hunter's Moon is something that has only been half explained. We know it causes the animals - not just the dragons - to be more aggressive towards everything but we don't know why. The only animals I've ever seen to resist the Hunter's Moon are the Sky Serpents but that's because they are holy creatures," Alani explained, "Hunter's Moon occurs in the months leading up till winter and signals the end of the summer. That's usually when we stop diving for pearls and other sea treasures and begin working more on the land."

Alani sighed deeply and leaned back up against Spitfire who purred softly. Her tail cradled around the girl keeping her safe and warm, all the while, keeping her eyes trained on the southern darkness of the forest. Hiccup smiled at the female dragon's actions. It was really rather cute to watch the fearsome beast fuss and coddle over Alani. It wasn't until Alani yawned widely that Astrid suggesting going to sleep. They did have another big day ahead of them and they needed to be well-rested for the remaining flight to Alani's island home. Hiccup couldn't wait to see it. Another place, other than his own island home so far up in the North. He stared up at the full moon in the sky above him and sighed. Already things were starting to show signs of being different. Back home on the isle of Berk, there was no such thing as a Hunter's Moon. No full moon to increase aggression in all the animals, no moon to signify the end of summer and the beginning of the fall and winter months.

A log in the fire cracked and popped before collapsing in on itself, sending a swarm of golden fireflies into the air. The fire settled

and dimmed, giving off less light than before but Hiccup was too exhausted to move and throw another piece on the fire. Besides, they were surrounded by their dragons; only an idiot with a death wish would even think to attack them.

Alani mumbled something unintelligible in her sleep and Spitfire cuddled the girl closer to her belly with a quiet rumble. Hiccup smiled at the affectionate display and rolled around to find a more comfortable spot against Toothless' sleeping form. The female dragon's electric blue eyes almost glowed in the pale light of the moon as her eyes fell on Hiccup. He felt his breath hitch. Spitfire's pupils were slits but rounded off into soft orbs as she realized the toothpick boy was only getting comfortable. The dragon grumbled a soft affirmative and her eyes returned to watching the darkness.

"Aren't you going to sleep?" Hiccup asked despite himself, tone slurred slightly by exhaustion. Spitfire's glowing eyes found his again and in the pale light of the moon, Hiccup could have sworn the dragoness shook her head. Hiccup briefly wondered if Alani knew her dragon stayed away all night before consciousness slipped from his fingers and he fell into a deep sleep filled with Scauldrons, black leather wings and flowing red hair.

"Good morning everyone!" Alani cheered. The rest of the group grumbled and mumbled about how early it was. Well, everyone except maybe Fishlegs; he'd gotten used to rising with the sun with his beloved Meatlug. It wasn't even an hour past dawn and the red-headed girl was already up and about; preparing breakfast, packing up her belongings and urging the rest of her party out of bed. Apparently, Alani was more of an early bird than everyone else including Spitfire. The dragoness was off on a large rock sunning herself in the early morning sun, watching the pale wingless hatchlings go about their business. When Astrid announced she'd be 'taking care' of anyone who slept late, the rest of the snoozing crew jumped to their feet and began eating and helping Alani clear up the camp.

"Hey Alani!" Hiccup called. The girl stopped in the midst of rolling up her sleeping roll, eyeing him inquisitively.

"How far do you reckon till we reach the island?"

"Nila Itsaso," Alani finished for him with a grin. Somewhere behind her, Spitfire grumbled and rolled over so the sun could warm her belly, "If we keep up the pace we had yesterday, we should be there at about sunset tonight."

Hiccup nodded in confirmation before suddenly realizing something.

"Hey Alani? You said you came to Berk one day even though you didn't mean to. It just sort of happened, right?"

Alani raised a confused eyebrow but nodded nonetheless.

"It's already been a day. Why's it taking so long?"

At this, Alani laughed, "You mean you haven't noticed?"

Hiccup frowned and shook his head. What was it he was supposed to

have noticed?

"We've been flying against the wind. The South wind is against us when we head further south. That's why I got to Berk in one day; I had the winds at my back."

"Hiccup!" Snotlout called loudly, causing the scrawny brunette and the red-head to jump, "You better not be skippin' out on the chores! If I have to work, so do you." Snotlout thrust an accusing finger in Hiccup's face. Hiccup rolled his eyes.

"Yeah, yeah. We wouldn't want that, now would we?" he asked sarcastically.

"Exactly!" Snotlout exclaimed and shot a seductive look at Alani. The girl's face turned red from trying to contain her laughter. Snotlout, thinking his masculine charms finally overcame the red-head, threw a casual arm over her shoulders and pulled her in close. The girl barely managed to squeak in fear and confusion before Astrid and Ruffnut's fists knocked Snotlout back and away from Alani. The Viking teen landed with a thud on the ground.

"Ow! Hey!" Snotlout glared at the two girls standing above him. Astrid and Ruffnut exchanged a satisfied smirk before leading a confused Alani away from the desperate boy.

"Watch it Snotlout! Maidenly space, remember?" Ruffnut called over her shoulder before cackling madly. The three girls headed over to where the dragons lazed in the sun and prepared their bags for takeoff.

Tuffnut and Fishlegs trudged over to where Snotlout, who was still sitting on the ground where he had landed, and Hiccup stood.

"Wow, dude, you just totally got your butt handed to you by a girl," Tuffnut remarked with a snicker. Snotlout's scowl grew deeper.

"Yeah, well for starters, that girl is your sister!"

"Ok, ok!" Hiccup pressed himself between Snotlout and Tuffnut as the two lunged at each other and trying to hold the two of them apart, "Hey! Take it easy! What would Alani think of you two?" Hiccup asked, narrowly missing having his face rearranged by an angry Tuffnut. At the red-head's name, the two broke apart, straightening their clothes and avoiding each others' eyes. Hiccup smiled inwardly. Keeping those two apart would be easy; all it took was a little 'Alani' and BAM! Instant not-fighting Vikings.

The girl in question looked up from strapping her pack onto Spitfire's saddle to look at the Viking boys in confusion. She leaned in towards Astrid and asked something, probably something concerning the boys of the group. Astrid laughed and waved her hand, occasionally motioning to them with an easy wave of her hand; probably dismissing any worrisome thoughts Alani might have. Alani shot another worried look towards Tuffnut and Snotlout each still ignoring the other before shaking her head with a small smile. She returned to her work and finished strapping down Spitfire's saddle bags and packs.

"Hey you guys!" Ruffnut shouted, effectively getting everyone's attention, "We're about ready to head out. Any of you ready to go?"

Everyone aside from Hiccup and Fishlegs shook their heads and rushed to get their things packed before the rest of the group took off without them. Hiccup cringed at the way Snotlout stuffed his more delicate items into his big sack.

Alani strode forward as everyone began mounting their dragons. Spitfire stepped up behind her as always.

"Everyone know that game plan?"

Everyone nodded. Alani smiled.

"Sweet! Then we'll just take off and be at Nila Itsaso by tonight!"

This caused a major outbreak of cheers. The majority of the party members were excited about seeing and discovering a new island with new people and dragons but they were mostly excited about not having to ride their dragons for another 24 hours. After all, the twins had only just gotten feeling back into their bottoms.

"In that case," Alani jumped up and mounted Spitfire with practiced grace, "Let's get going, shall we?"

9. Chapter 9

Hello there dear readers! I love you, please don't hurt me.

Unfortunately this is not a story update so I'm sorry for crushing your hopes and dreams.

I am so, so, so, so sorry that I haven't updated in like forever but my husband (my beloved computer) was violently hacked by some dumbfuck and is currently not working. I can't even make it past the Windows loading screen before it kills itself. I am so pissed! Trust me when I say that when I find the hacker responsible, I will stab him in the eye with a fucking fork! I am that pissed! My hard drive isn't working and while there is a high chance that all my files will be recoverable (cross your fingers!) I will not be able to work on any of my stories for now. I am having someone come over this weekend to fix up my husband but until then, my beloved computer is in a coma. On top of that, studying for my upcoming finals without a computer is also proving to be rather difficult but I'm managing.

Anyway, I hope to have another long chapter up and running next week but don't get your hopes up too high. I still have finals to study for and unfortunately, those have my first priority.

~White Wolf Writers~

10. Chapter 10

Hey, White Wolf Writers here,

Unfortunately this is not an update as much as I wish it was. My computer's status has not changed and there have been some serious problems in recovering my files. But the people who are helping me are convinced that it is not a lost cause and that (eventually) they will be able to resurrect my computer and my files along with it. But unfortunately doing something that like will require money and as soon as I am more financially stable, that will be the first thing I do.

Again, I apologize for the inconvenience and thank those who are still willing to follow me from the bottom of my butt. (I'd say heart but my butt's bigger.)

End
file.